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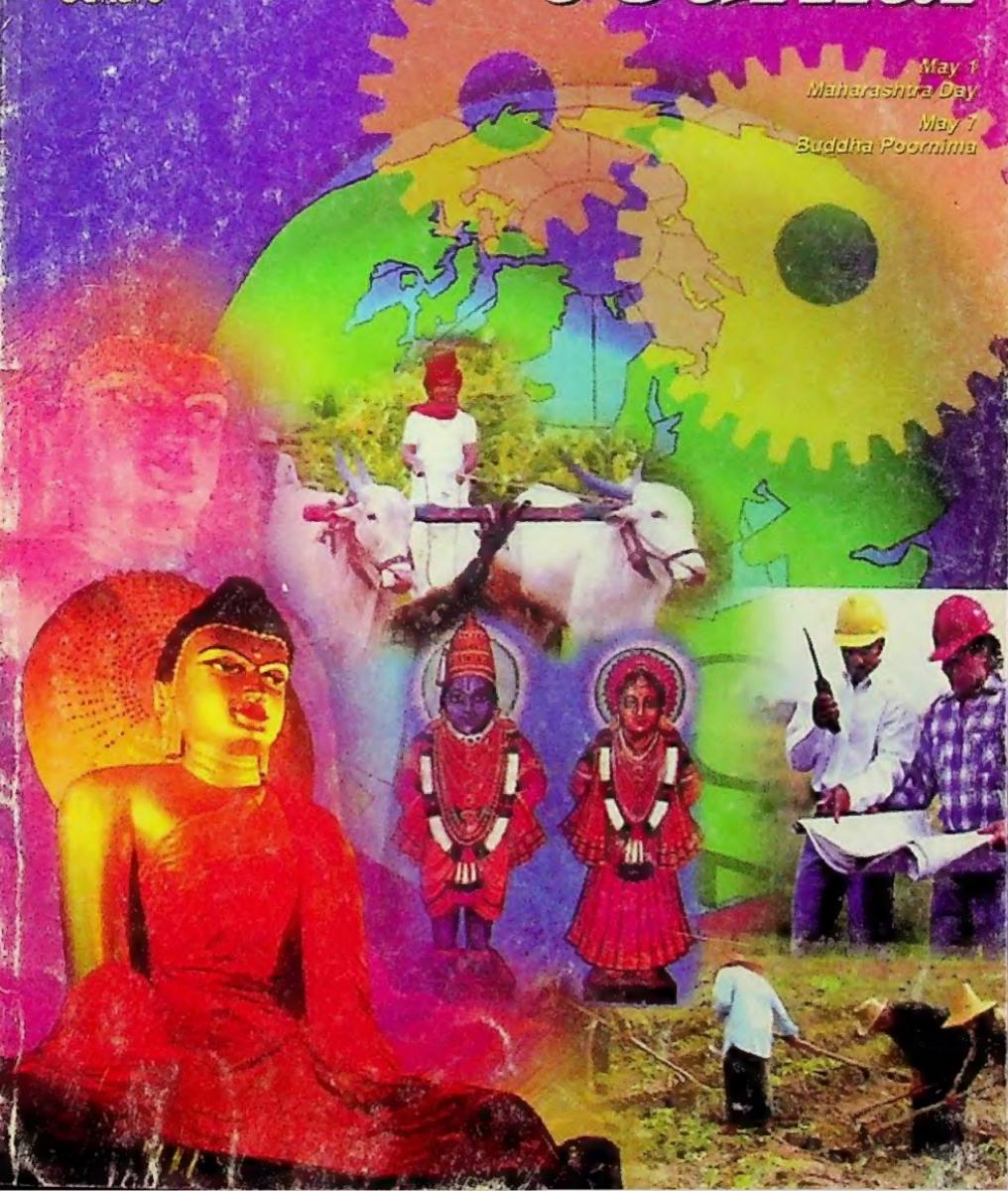
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Janardhan  
8.22

Buddhi  
8.29

Davi  
8.29  
11 Jun 2021

Surya  
8.39

Om  
50

Om  
56

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।  
ये पृथग्धर्मचरणाः पृथग्धर्मफलैषिणः  
पृथग्धर्मैस्समर्चन्ति तरमै धर्मात्मने नमः।

*Yam pruthagdharmacharanaah  
pruthagdharmaphalaishinah  
Pruthagdharmaissamarcharanti tasmai  
dharmaatmane nanah*

Obeisance unto Him  
who is of the form of  
**Dharma**, whom those  
who, following several  
Dharmas and desiring  
the fruits of those  
various Dharmas,  
worship with those  
manifold Dharmas.

Mahabharata



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Echoes from Eternity

## Vedic Religion

**I**ndia has followed the Vedic religion for at least 3500 years. Men remarkable for their spiritual power, wisdom, and universality of outlook have been thrown up from different parts of the country. The Hindus even today show certain essential traits of behaviour which are in conformity with some of these principles and they often present a contrast to similar classes of people at home and abroad.

The order of the six principles has remained qualitatively much as the Vedas put them. The one that created dissent earliest of all was the last — ritual (*karmakanda*). The Vedic text, *Sabda Brahman* (which is last but one), is still being learnt orally by scores of people in different parts of India. And it is to the eternal credit of Western savants that they published authoritative texts of the Vedas. Valmiki compares Hanuman's quest of Sita to the search for a lost Veda (*Nashatam Veda-srutim iva*): these devoted scholars

have performed the task of cultural volunteers in the present times. Consecration and self-dedication (*Dikshat* and *Tapah*), the third and fourth principles, are found to have remarkable parallels in the whole-hearted pursuit of knowledge among Western scholars and scientists. Rita (order) in the wide (*brihat*) Vedic sense is still to be realised by the world, torn asunder by manifold forces of disorder; and the harmony of the introverted Yogic path has to find its parallel in the concrete, external relations of men, communities and nations. Finally, the first principle is ever first; Satya as integrity, for every moment of life; and Satya as Sat or Reality for those exalted moments when man 'feels greater than he knows' or those exalted men who live 'on the peak of existence (*Kutastha*)'. There have been leaders of thought in different ages who have asserted that religion is synonymous with truth — that God is Truth.

May 1-15, 2001

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*Our Cover:*

May 1, Maharashtra Day

May 7, Buddha Poornima

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Kulapati Vani

# Vedic Culture

Dr. K. M. Munshi

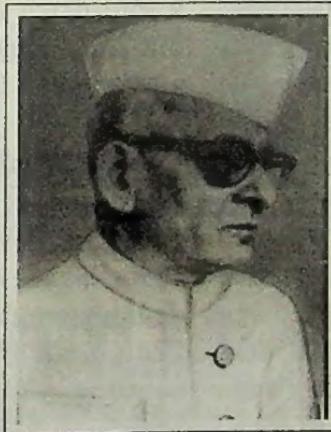
Vedic culture, the culture of the Vedic Aryans, brought an increasing number of people within its fold as it spread through the country.

Throughout the history of India, the process of integration comprises two simultaneous movements: one owes its origin to Aryan Culture and operated by virtue of the momentum which the values of that culture possess; the other works itself upward from the way of life of the Early Dravidian and other non-Aryan cultures in the country into the framework of the Aryan Culture modifying its form and content, though not the

fundamentals, weaving a harmonious pattern continuously. The first movement provides vitality and synthesis; the second contributes vigour and variety. But it is the harmonious adjustment of both that gives to India, age after age, her strength, tenacity and sense of mission.

The adjustment made against the background of racial fusion is symbolized

by the sacredness accorded both to the *Nigama*, the Vedic tradition, and the *Agama*, the Dravidian tradition: by the equal



**Sweeping changes were made in the religious, social and cultural outlook and institutions of each successive age. But the vitality of the central ideas and fundamental values were never so lost as to bring about complete disintegration.**

ritualistic importance of the Vedic *homa* and the Dravidian *puja* to the inseverable Godhood of the Aryan Vishnu and the non-Aryan Siva. It must never be forgotten that Vyasa, the founder and prophet of *Arya-dharma*, and Sri Krishna, the World Teacher, whose message is its fundamental scripture, are both sons by high-browed Aryans of non-Aryan mothers.

Vedic culture, the culture of the Vedic Aryans, brought an increasing number of people within its fold as it spread through the country. Sweeping changes were made in the religious, social and cultural outlook and institutions of each successive age. But the vitality of the central ideas and fundamental values was never so lost as to bring about complete

disintegration. In some periods, however, the two movements produced adjustments at many, if not all, levels; the vitality was converted into irresistible vigour; full nourishment was drawn from the soil of race memory and tradition. At such times a great Age, like the Age of the Guptas, would dawn in India. On the other hand, when the two movements failed either by external or internal maladjustments to support each other, conflict between the two became inevitable; growth ceased to be vigorous; disintegration began as in the beginning of the eleventh century, when the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni overwhelmed parts of north India, the Age of Expansion ended, the Age of Resistance began.

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Letter from the President

# Gandhiji and Labour

R. Venkataraman

**Gandhiji preached dignity of labour in the following words:**

**"I pride in calling myself a scavenger, weaver, spinner, farmer. I am pleased to identify myself with the labour classes because without labour we can do nothing".**

We cannot eliminate machinery and heavy industries because the villager wants buses for travel, electricity for lighting and fertilizer for crop production. At the same time we cannot blindly mechanise everything sweeping the rural folk into depth of unemployment and poverty. We have to hammer out a system suited to our conditions, needs and skills.

Trade unions, like the party system, are a Western innovation. Our ancient culture regards work as worship. The Bhagavad Gita says:

*Sarirayatra api cha the  
Na prasiddyath akarmanah  
Even the mere maintenance  
of your body*

Would not be possible,  
without work.

The Bible tells us:  
In the sweat of thy brow  
Thou shalt eat thy bread  
Gandhiji preached dignity of  
labour in the following words:

**"I pride in calling myself a  
scavenger, weaver, spinner,  
farmer. I am pleased to identify  
myself with the labour classes  
because without labour we can  
do nothing".**

However until the advent of

the industrial revolution, workers did not gain status in society and were regarded as inferior persons.

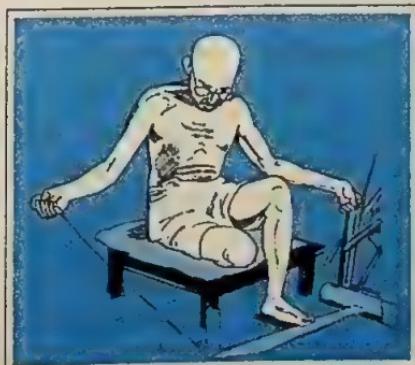
Employment of a large number of workers under one roof, having common wages and conditions of work brought them together under the Trade Union organization and enabled them to collectively put forward demands for better wages, service conditions and fringe benefits. The worker ceased to be an individual and acquired a collective personality.

Trade Unions endeavoured to narrow the gap between the value added by labour and the price paid for it. This necessarily led to conflict and confrontation leading to sour

**In contrast to the Marxist doctrine of confrontation between labour and employer, Gandhiji said: "My ideal is that Capital and Labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony. Capital and Labour need not be antagonistic to each other".**

industrial relations.

Gandhiji spiritualised every aspect of life, political, social, domestic and industrial. In contrast to the Marxist doctrine of confrontation between labour and employer, Gandhiji said: "My ideal is that Capital and Labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony. Capital and Labour need not be antagonistic to each other". He further said that in India a class war is not only not inevitable, it is avoidable. He said that the employer must



**The Marxist doctrine of class conflict has evaporated and the Marxist governments of East Europe have themselves cast it out of the window. Time was when they spoke of world Communism. The fact is that Marxism is in its last throes of existence.**

regard himself a trustee of the welfare of the labouring classes under him.

Gandhiji was convinced that the textile workers of Ahmedabad deserved the wages demanded by them. He pleaded with the Mill Owners who were also his friends to come to a settlement with their labour.

Gandhiji himself stated, "I am in a most delicate situation. The millhands case was strong. Smt. Anusuyabai had to battle with her own brother Sri Ambalal Sarabhai who led the fray on behalf of the mill owners. My relations with them were friendly... I had consultations with them and requested them to refer the dispute to arbitration but they refused to recognize the principle of arbitration". Therefore Gandhiji led the strike of the Ahmedabad textile mill

workers in February 1918. He clearly enunciated the principles on which a strike should be conducted. These were:

1. Never to resort to violence
2. Never to molest blacklegs
3. Never to depend upon alms during strike, and
4. To remain firm no matter how long the strike continued and to earn bread during the strike by any other honest means".

When after two weeks, the strikers showed signs of weakening, Gandhiji resorted to a fast not to coerce the mill owners to relent but to strengthen the morale of the workers.

Let me now turn to the relevance of the Gandhian approach to the present state of industrial relations in the

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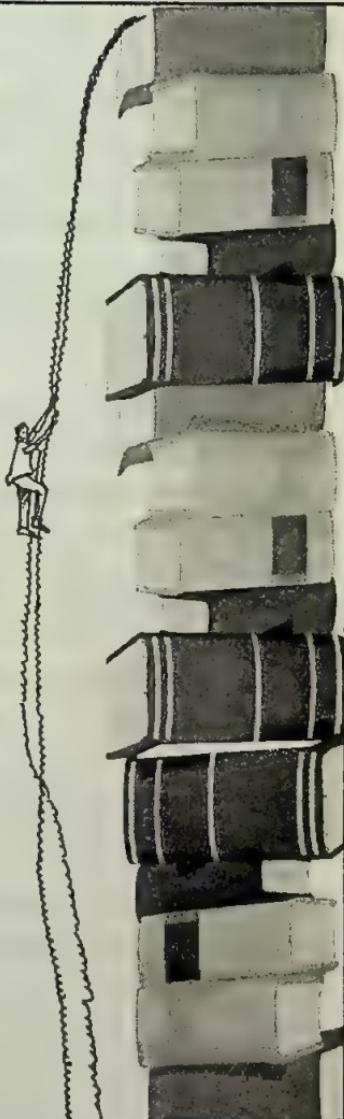


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changing economic scenario.

The Marxist doctrine of class conflict has evaporated and the Marxist governments of East Europe have themselves cast it out of the window. Time was when they spoke of world Communism. The fact is that Marxism is in its last throes of existence.

A revolutionary change has overtaken the world. Regimented and controlled economies have yielded place to free market economies.

One cannot enter the export market which is fiercely competitive unless:

1. the quality of goods is comparable to the best in the world and

2. Prices are competitive.

In this context the Gandhian concept of the duty of Labour assumes importance. Gandhiji told Labour, "Your duty is to work to the best of your ability for the wage you receive".

From time immemorial, the Indian artisan had striven to

**The policy of unbridled freedom to hire and fire may suit countries with shortage of manpower and not those with huge unemployment. That is why Gandhiji emphasized that we should substitute mass production with production by the masses.**

produce the best. He was proud of his skill and achieved excellence in his chosen field. It is that spirit that Labour should recapture if we have to be competitive in the global market. He also called on Labour "not to destroy the mill property with a view to squaring your quarrel with the mill owners". He inculcated the spirit of service in production and non-violence in dealing with the employer. In the market economy, the efficiency of Labour, its skills, its quality consciousness and innovative ideas assume very great importance in improving the competitive edge.

But labour can be enthused to improve productivity only if it is

assured that improved productivity will not result in unemployment. The oft-repeated argument that improved productivity would bring higher wages which in turn will unleash demand for consumer goods and durables and thus create more jobs, though correct at the macro level, can hardly bring any solace to the worker who faces redundancy as a result of higher productivity. This theory has relevance to countries with shortage of manpower and little unemployment. In countries with astronomical figures of unemployment, it is difficult to enthuse workers in productivity schemes unless they are assured of job security.

For instance, the earliest agreement between TISCO workers and the Management contained a provision that there shall be no retrenchment as a

**In a market economy, industrial peace and harmony must receive the highest priority. Anything that affects quality and cost will spell ruin to both the Employer and Labour.**

result of rationalization schemes in the TISCO. This can be achieved by matching expansion or starting new schemes

along with schemes of rationalization, induction of labour saving equipment etc.

Where, however, such schemes are not feasible, voluntary retirement schemes acceptable to the workers should be framed and persons on the verge of retirement should be chosen for it. The rule that "last come first to go", causes greater hardship to younger people.

The policy of unbridled freedom to hire and fire may suit countries with shortage of manpower and not those with huge unemployment. That is why Gandhiji emphasized that we should substitute mass production with production by the masses.

The gains of productivity

should be shared with the labour, so that their enthusiasm may be kindled and interest sustained. Incentive schemes have been devised by many industrial establishments with great success. It is advantageous to frankly discuss with labour the incentive schemes to be introduced so that their fears may be allayed and their helpful suggestions adopted. Consultations with labour also gives them a sense of participation and a feeling of partnership, a thought which Gandhiji felt should prevail in industrial relationships.

Good industrial relations can always find solutions for all problems. According to Gandhiji, such relations develop where:

(a) the employer and labour have mutual respect for each other and treat each other as equal partners in the common endeavour for increasing goods and services.

(b) there is free and frank discussion of the issues and negotiations are conducted in good faith with neither side trying to take unfair advantage over the other.

(c) there is an attitude of give and take and accommodation of each other's point of view.

(d) there is no violence either to persons or to property of the unit

(e) the demand put forward by Labour is just and reasonable and,

(f) strike is resorted to only as the very last weapon of the labour.

Gandhiji urged that "all industrial disputes should be settled by mutual consultation, negotiations and arbitration. They should not resort to direct action so long as they have not exhausted all avenues of peaceful settlement. They should however be prepared to strike if the employer refused arbitration or does not carry out the award of the arbitrators".

In a market economy, industrial peace and harmony must receive the highest priority. Anything that affects quality and cost will spell ruin to both the Employer and Labour.

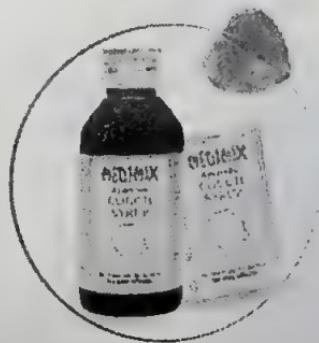
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Forty-first Birthday Musings

S.Ramakrishnan

**Prayerful greetings and soulful good wishes to all the brothers and sisters, young and old, in all walks of life, born in or migrated to, Maharashtra; also to their beloved kith and kin overseas.**

The present State of Maharashtra was born in Free India on May 1, 1960, the last State of our India that is Bharat which could not resist and stem the sway of "linguistic patriotism" unleashed by the State Reorganisation Commission set up in 1956 with S. Fazl Ali as Chairman, H.N. Kunzru and Sardar K. M. Panikkar as members and P.C. Choudhari as Secretary, by a reluctant Prime Minister Pandit

Jawaharlal Nehru.

Mumbai—Mumbapuri—is the capital of Maharashtra. It was, and happily still continues to be, a *Mini-India*.

Mahatma Gandhi, whose *Karmabhumi* was Mumbai for 17 long years, launched all the historic national movements from here (Mani Bhavan, Gamdevi near Gowalia Tank Maidan, now rechristened August Kranti Maidan) for liberating India from the imperial yoke.



The spontaneous massive upsurge and response of all the citizens of Mumbai to his clarion National Call deeply moved Gandhiji. He then hailed the capital metropolis of Maharashtra as "Bombay the Beautiful".

Mumbai is also the *Karmabhumi* of Kulapati Dr. K. M. Munshi, the Founder-President of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, solely devoted to Life, Literature and Culture. He has hailed Mumbai as his SCHOOL OF LIFE and the SPRINGBOARD from which he plunged into LIFE'S ENDEAVOURS.

Let me quote select extracts from Dr. Munshiji's reply to the felicitations at a Public Reception organized by the Citizens of Mumbai at Sardar Patel Stadium, Worli, Mumbai on December 30, 1962 on his 76<sup>th</sup> Birthday:

*"I owe a debt of gratitude, first to this great city of ours — the city of Bombay with its slums, palaces and shrines — to which I came in June 1907 seeking a*

*career. Its bubbling life was a challenge to the puny, penniless, friendless newcomer of 20 years. Walking in its streets, reading in its free libraries, satisfying a thirst for glamour in the foul-smelling pits of its various theatres, receiving friendly and unfriendly impacts, I developed a zest to work unremittingly.*

*"The libraries of the Bombay gave me a glimpse of the literary and academic world. Several rising literary men encouraged me to write in my mother tongue Gujarati. Its press and journals gave me the much-needed monetary relief, and incidentally provided the facility to read proofs, write leaders and articles, and to attempt novels. When the time came, many were the friends whose admiration gave me the urge to excel myself in pouring out my soul through literature in Gujarati, English and Hindi.*

*"Bombay's political life attracted me to public services. Some of its political leaders led me into the battle of freedom. Sometimes the people of*

*Bombay, by their very confidence attracted me to the thorny path of sacrifice.*

*"In the thirties, the Bombay University, my alma mater, gave me an insight into the role and technique of higher education, opened for me the mysteries of how the mind and character of the young were formed and created an urge in me to make experiments on the ways to impart knowledge, of which nobility and character are the fruits — sheela vritta phalam srutam.*

*"Bombay, therefore, was MY SCHOOL OF LIFE. It showed me the way and gave me scope. It was the SPRINGBOARD from which I plunged into LIFE'S ENDEAVOURS."*

## CAPITAL AND LABOUR Gandian concept

The birth of the official unilingual State of Maharashtra significantly coincides with the International Labour Day, May 1, observed all over the world.

To the immortal Mahatma,

Labour and Capital were two faces of the same coin. None can be said to be more convinced than him on this count. He respected Capital but indisputably his sympathies were with Labour.

The right to strike is the right that Gandhiji defended with all the emphasis at his command. When he felt *totally justified*, he did not hesitate to use it.

Yet he wrote in *Harijan* of February 1948, "Strikes, in coal mines or elsewhere, mean material loss to the whole Society, not excluding the strikers themselves."

Gandhiji was apprehensive about the corrosive effect of politics on a right which should only find a judicious application. He further elaborated on the same issue thus: "*I wonder if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power which afflicts the political world, the East and the West*".

Gandhiji's conviction was that Labour and Capital are complementary to each other. He wrote "*Capital and Labour*

*should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony.*

*"Today Capital is afraid of Labour, and Labour scowls at Capital. I want to replace that relationship by one of mutual trust and respect.*

*"National interest should override the interest of either those who employ Capital or those who work, labour and create".*

Two Nations, Japan in Asia and Germany in Europe, whose economies were shattered by World War II, were worse off than India that had gained independence around that time. These two Nations have forged on well ahead of us and have emerged as major economic powers, members of the Club of G-7. This has been possible only by Capital and Labour complimenting each other and holding national interest as supreme.

Over half a century of freedom, freedom to determine our destiny and to make every Indian to feel equal to any other people of the world has only seen us still

struggling with large chunks of our population still below the poverty line. Fifty years ago one could buy a dollar for five rupees. Today, one needs nine times more rupees to buy a dollar!

Alas! Unfortunately there is no national fervour, no national determination, no national will to comprehensively build up our India, including to make the rupee as strong as, if not stronger than, not just the dollar but any currency of the world.

Be it Capitalists or Labour, the need of the hour is to link hands and not raise them either in confrontation or in rebellion.

Resources, be they Capital or skills should compliment each other and not confront, weaken and supplant each other.

Life - personal, regional, national and informational - is inter-dependent. All must be imbued with the will and determination to work in a spirit of give and take and in complete harmony and Co-operation. This is the sole catalyst, the *Sanjeevini* which will unerringly propel our *Punyabhumi Bharat* to forge ahead.

Jai Maharashtra, Jai Bharat.

*Gita - literary image of Lord Krishna*

# Saint Jnaneshwar

Swami Ranganathananda

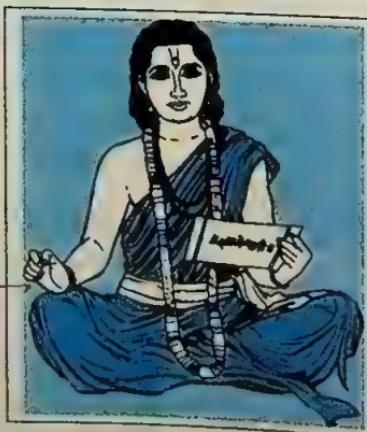
In his Jnaneshwari, he calls the literary image of Lord Krishna. Indeed one can say that his Jnaneshwari is the literary image of his knowledge and experience.

**S**ri Jnaneshwar, the well-known saint of Maharashtra, was not only a realized soul but a gifted poet. At a very early age, he wrote his masterpiece, the *Jnaneshwari*, a commentary on the Gita in Marathi in exquisite poetry. He has explained the Gita not by recourse to rational arguments but by the profuse use of similes, metaphors and illustrations. Initiated into the Natha Sampradaya by his elder brother Nivrittinatha, disciple of Gahininatha, he assimilated, in his later life, the non-dual *jnana* of Vedanta and

the pure *bhakti* of the Bhagawata Dharma. In his Jnaneshwari, he calls the Gita the literary image of Lord Krishna. Indeed one can say that his Jnaneshwari is the literary image of his knowledge and experience.

Like Sri Shankaracharya, he was an *advaita-vadin*, a non-dualist. He explains verse IX. 12 of the Gita as follows:

“The Lord says, although I am formless, without limiting conditions, inactive, beyond the qualities, changeless and all-pervasive, ignorant people ascribe to Me



form, limitations, actions, qualities, and a definite place. Although I am unmanifest, desireless and devoid of action and enjoyment, they think of Me as manifest, full of desires,

agent and enjoyer. They impute to Me hands and feet, eyes and ears, caste and family, although I do not possess them. Even though I am self-existent, they make idols of Me and install them with proper rites of consecration, and though I am all-pervading, they invite Me with an invocation and bid farewell to Me with an immersion. They worship an idol as a form of divinity and later throw away the broken idol as worthless. They thus impute to Me human attributes".

Sri Jnaneshwar says that true knowledge consists in knowing God in the non-dual form and that devotion should culminate

**Sri Jnaneshwar says that everyone should perform his duty as a *yajna* and offer his or her actions as flowers at the feet of God. This message is as relevant today as seven hundred years ago, and deserves to be known not only in this country but also all over the world.**

in *Advaita bhakti*. The devotee should realize God as all-pervasive; and wherever he casts his eyes, he should see God therein. This shows that Sri Jnaneshwar had become a *Jnani-Bhakta* of the

highest order as described in the Gita (Verse, VII.17).

Although he was born in a village, Alandi, about 20 km from Pune, he is worshipped all over Maharashtra as *Mauli* (Mother) by a large number of devotees. The members of the Warkari Sampradaya have kept the lamp of devotion burning in Maharashtra. Sri Jnaneshwar says that everyone should perform his duty as a *yajna* and offer his or her actions as flowers at the feet of God. This message is as relevant today as seven hundred years ago, and deserves to be known not only in this country but also all over the world.

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# Power, Corruption and Criminality

Dr. T. H. Chowdary

Pitirim Sorokin, the Russian sociologist, found that the greater the power, the greater was the immorality and criminality in the person.

Pitirim Sorokin was a great sociologist of Russia. When the Communists took over, he left the USSR and settled in the USA. He undertook a study of criminality and immorality in relation to power throughout the recorded history of mankind. His book *Power and Morality* has been published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. He found that the greater the power, the greater was the immorality and criminality in the person. He investigated kings and emperors, Presidents and Prime Ministers, political leaders and revolutionaries. His finding was that immorality and criminality were in direct proportion to the amount of

power possessed. Lord Acton has said that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

In the United States, the Presidential pardon to criminals and fugitives given before Bill Clinton laid down office, is now under investigation.

In Japan, a number of Prime Ministers had to resign because of the scandalous proportions of their corruption. Two elected Presidents of Philippines and one of Peru were also found to be hugely corrupt and had to be kicked out of office by people's movements. Indonesia has been ruled by Suharto for 30 years and his corruption and aggrandizement by members of

**What is surprising is that these people believed to be corrupt and found to be criminal are being elected by the people and after such an election, the criminals are able to say that the highest court namely, the people, have found them not guilty and all charges of corruption and crime were evil accusations of other corrupt politicians who are their enemies!**

his family are only now coming to light. All these worthies indulged in populist rhetoric to please the poor.

India is no exception. We have Chief Ministers and Ministers who are found to be guilty by courts but they have so much money that they are engaging the best lawyers and are moving court after higher court in order to prolong the course of the law. What is surprising is that these people believed to be corrupt and found to be criminal are being elected by the people and after such an election, the criminals are able to say that the highest court namely, the people, have found them not guilty and all charges of corruption and crime were evil accusations of other corrupt politicians who are

their enemies!

When the highest in the land can be corrupt with impunity and people forget and forgive them by electing them again and again, is it right of us to expect Government servants to be upright? Long ago, Chanakya said, "It is very difficult to say when the fish is drinking water! It is very difficult for anybody to swallow honey without wetting one's tongue". If corrupt ministers are collecting money, their servant officers do take a part of the collections and keep it for themselves.

That corruption would be rampant and even the ordinary people would be corrupted has been clearly spoken about and written down by the statesman Shri Rajagopalachari long ago.

He said that if the Government becomes a trader, industrialist and dispenser of "welfare", all in the name of bringing about a socialistic pattern of society, then within a generation, the entire nation will be corrupt. When the Food Corporation of India was launched to procure foodgrains directly from the farmers, bypassing private traders, Rajaji warned that it was the beginning of immortalising the innocent and god-fearing farmer. He said that Government officials would induce farmers to mix stones and chaff in the paddy and wheat for mutual benefit. Corruption is what we are witnessing from the lowliest citizen to the highest in the land.

Elections require hundreds of crores of rupees to be spent by politicians and political parties. 90% of that expenditure is unaccounted money. It has come out of corruption and in the act are involved not only politicians

**When the Food Corporation of India was launched to procure foodgrains directly from the farmers, by-passing private traders, Rajaji warned that it was the beginning of immortalising the innocent and god-fearing farmer.**

and political parties, but ordinary people also.

It is universally recognized that it is fear of God and religious precepts and stories of the conduct of the best in ancient literature that preserve people's morality, at least as a standard to be followed and by which people can be judged. What we are now seeing is therefore, the consequence of the low status given to ethics, morality and religion in our educational system. The absolute unaccountability of politicians for their misdeeds and the ineffectiveness of the judiciary have brought India into this state of corruption and criminality. A Gandhian or a Mao Zedong type of movement alone appears to be the solution for cleansing this country of corruption and criminality.

*Death 563 BC - 483 BC  
Mother - 599 BC*

# Buddha, the Enlightened

## 563 BC - 483 BC

Thomas & Thomas

*Gautama* Buddha's original name was Siddhartha Sakya-muni Gautama — which, translated into English, means *Gautama who belongs to the Sakya tribe and who has reached the goal of perfection*. He was born of an ancient Indian prince five centuries before Jesus was born to a humble Judean carpenter. His father ruled the tribe of Sakya under the shadow of the Himalayas. His mother was one of the Raja's two wives, both of them daughters of a neighbouring king. When the

princess felt that the time of her delivery was near, she set out on foot — as was the tribal custom — to her father's palace for the confinement. But her labour overtook her on the journey, and she gave birth to Gautama in a quiet grove of satinwood trees.

The boy grew up amidst the pleasures of the royal court at Kapilavastu. For all the contact he had with the outer world of his people, he might have been a prisoner in a fortress of marble and



gold. His life was all too happy and all too unreal in its dazzling splendour. He plucked every luscious fruit from the tree of life, reaching the ever higher branches as he grew taller and more ambitious. And then at nineteen he garnered the fairest prize — he married his beautiful cousin, Yasodhara. But the brilliance of his marriage was darkened by the shadow of disappointment. For his wife was childless. The young prince began to brood. And he made up his mind to examine these footsteps of sorrow that sullied the garden of his life. Why, he asked himself, is the gift of life even at its best, like a counterfeit jewel given to us by a stingy god? Why must even the happiest existence be full of the flaws of unfulfilled hopes? Was life worth the living after all?

One day he went driving through the countryside with his charioteer, Channa. On the way, he met an aged man bent and broken by the weight of his years. Gautama turned away in horror. And his charioteer whispered, "This, my prince, is the

way of life." And before he could absorb the shock of this discovery, the prince came upon a beggar covered with the sores of a loathsome disease: "This, too, is the way of life," said Channa. Gautama drove on. And he chanced upon a naked corpse, swollen, discoloured, and rotting in the sun. "This," said Channa, "is the end of life".

Back to the palace went the prince to meditate. Now that he had been brought face to face with the misery of man, he was determined to do something about it. He opened his heart to the wandering monks who begged at the doorstep of his palace. He listened to their discourse and asked them to tell him about the indignities and the deceptions of this world. And then he made up his mind to leave the palace and its pleasures and to become a lonely pilgrim in search of the truth.

As he was ready to commence his journey, word came to him that his wife had at long last given birth to a son. The people pressed around him in wild celebration.

"Happy the father, happy the mother, happy the wife of such a son and husband," they sang. But the young prince thought to himself grimly, "This is another strong tie that I shall have to break". He attended the banquet prepared by his father, the Rajah, to celebrate the birth; and then, in the middle of the night, he tiptoed into the chamber of his wife. In the dim light of the lamp he bent over her sleeping face. She was breathing the fragrance of the flowers that encased the bed. One arm held the head of the little infant. He longed to embrace them, but refrained for fear that he might wake them. One last look — and then he tiptoed out of the room and ordered his charioteer to saddle two of his swiftest horses.

Through the black and silver stretches of the night he rode with Channa, and the voice of the Tempter pursued him. "Return and be a King, and I will make you the greatest monarch over the four continents. Only give up this mad enterprise".

But the young prince refused to listen to the voice. The promise that it held out to him was but the empty wind of the night. In the

dawn he reached the bank of a river. He cut off his long, flowing hair, stripped himself of his princely robes and his jewellery, and gave them all, together with his horse and his sword, to his servant Channa, bidding him to return home and to tell his father and his wife about his new resolve. And then, having put on a peasant's smock, he set out to seek wisdom from the priestly sages who lived in the caverns of the hills.

But he found that he had nothing to learn from the teachers of the old religions. It was not for *their* wisdom that he had given up his wealth and his family to assume the raiments of a beggar. Like the Rajahs of India, these religious teachers were the masters of the people; and they held the souls of the masses in the bondage of superstition and witchcraft and ritual and ceremony. They were a race of conquerors who called themselves Aryans and who divided the people into social castes, ranging all the way from the arrogant Brahmins at the top to the "untouchable" Outcastes at the bottom. No, these Brahman

priests knew nothing of the truth. For six years he had followed their advice to the letter of the law. The only way to salvation, they had proclaimed, was through living the life of an ascetic. He must do continual penance and mortify his flesh. Then only — they said — would he succeed in purifying himself of his sins. He had fasted and prayed and mortified his flesh, and his great endurance had won for him the admiration of many a weaker man. But through all this asceticism he had arrived no nearer to the truth. The way to his peace of mind lay not through the agony

of his body. He began to eat and to lead a normal life again. And the superstitious men who had flocked to him as his disciples began to desert him now in their disappointment at his "apostasy". Once more he found himself alone.

And one night, as he sat under a bo-tree struggling with his doubt and his loneliness, a great peace descended upon him. And when he rose in the dawn, he was no longer Gautama the Sceptic but Buddha the Enlightened. For at last he had grasped the great mystery of human suffering, its causes and its cure.

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# Valmiki Ramayana

## Uttarakanda



यकृते च वयं लङ्कां त्यक्त्वा याता रसातलम् ।  
तदगतं नो महाबाहो महद्विष्णुकृतं भयम् ॥

*Yakrute Cha Vayam Lankaam Tyaktvaa Yaataa Rasaatalam  
Tadgatam No Mahaabaaho Mahadvishnukrutam Bhayam*

O hero! The great fear that compelled us to leave Lanka and to take refuge in Rasatala — that fear caused by Vishnu — has now been dissipated.

असकृत्तेन भग्ना हि परित्यज्य स्वमालयम् ।  
विदुताः सहिताः सर्वे प्रविष्टाः स्म रसातलम् ॥

*Asakruttena Bhagnaa Hi Parityajya Svamaalayam  
Vidrutaah Sahitaah Sarve Pravishtaah Sma Rasaatalam*

Because of that fear, we again and again, abandoned our retreat, and we entered into Rasatala.

अस्मदीया च लङ्घेयं नगरी राक्षसोषिता ।  
निवेशिता तव भ्रात्रा धनाद्यक्षेण धीमता ॥

*Asmadeeyaa Cha Lankeyam Nagaree Raakshasoshitaa  
Niveshitaa Tava Bhrautraa Dhanaadhyakshena Dheemataa*

Your brother, that crafty lord of wealth, took possession of Lanka city, the abode of the Rakshasas.

यदि नामात्र शक्यं स्यात्माम्ना दानेन वानघ ।  
तरसा वा महाबाहो प्रत्यानेतुं कृतं भवेत् ॥

*Yadi Naamaatra Shakyam Syaatmaamnaa Daanena Vaanagh  
Tarasaa Vaa Mahaabaaho Pratyaanetum Krutam Bhavet*

O great hero! If it is possible to regain the possession of it by conciliation, gifts or force, then please do so.

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# Hanuman – the Scholar

H. S. Ananthanarayana

Hanuman's speech was charming (*citra*) and all the three components (*tristhanavyayanjana*), viz. bodily act, speech and mind's thought were in total harmony (cf. *Manasye-kam vacasyekam karmanyekam mahatmana*). He is *buddhimataam varishtam* — best among the astute.

**H**anuman, a minister of the monkey-king Sugriva in Valmiki Ramayana, accosted Rama and Lakshmana in Sanskrit, assuming the guise of a *bhiksu* or mendicant. It is not known what language or dialect he, as a monkey, employed while speaking with other members of his tribe. He was anyway well-versed in Sanskrit; his speech was at once gentle (*slaksna*), pleasing (*manojna*), and

propitious (*kalyani*). Rama was greatly impressed by Hanuman's soft speech (*mrudu vakya*), and has only praise for him (Ramayana IV.3.28-33). He tells Lakshmana that Hanuman has studied the Vedic lore thoroughly and extols him thus: "Hanuman is disciplined (*vinita*) in Rigveda,

has well memorised (*dharin*) Yajurveda, and is a scholar (*vidvan*) in Samaveda, without a good training in all of which it



is hardly possible (*sakyam*) for one to speak (*prabhasitum*) that way".

Hanuman was further complimented by Rama for being a good student (*bahudha srutam*) of grammar (*vyakarana*). Rama says, "Indeed, Hanuman has studied the grammar in its entirety (*krtsnam*); though speaking much (*bahu vyaharatapi*), he has not uttered a single solecism (*apasabditam*)". We may recall Patanjali here who, while listing the advantages of the study of grammar, says that it must be studied so that the use of corrupt forms is avoided (*apasabdham ... prayujya... prayascittiya ma bhuma ityadhyeyam vyakaranam*). The use of the word *srutam* or heard here suggests that grammar was still handed down orally at the time of Ramayana.

Hanuman knew the *siksa* or phonetics which is evidenced by Rama's statement. He says, "No defect (*dosham*) indicative of his inner feeling was seen either on his face, eyes, forehead, or

eyebrows". This reminds us the statements of *siksa* texts which condemn the six vile modes of recitation — *na sirah kampayed gatram bhruvau capyaksini tatha* — 'one must not shake the head, limbs, eyebrows or eyes'. Hanuman knew the best style of speech delivery. Rama tells Lakshmana thus: "There is in Hanuman's speech neither prolixity (*avistaram*) nor ambiguity (*asandigdham*), neither slowness (*avilambitam*) nor unnecessary speed (*adrutam*); and he speaks in a level tone (*madhyame svare*)". Hanuman had acquired this proficiency through proper education and training (*samskarakramasampa*nn). Slowness, speed, drawl, nasal twang are listed as defects in speech (*Sarvasammatasiksa 36 – gitि sighri sirahkampi...; also tvaritam nirastam vilambitam...pragitam...vaden...natu sanunasyam*).

The use of the attributes *urastam* or residing in the heart and *kanthagam* or going through the throat with reference to

*vakyam* or speech suggests that whatever was in his heart was expressed by Hanuman, i.e. his inner feelings and outer expressions were the same, not different; therefore, he is trustworthy. A level tone is known to be born of throat (Paniniya siksa 7-8: marutas... janayati svaram...kanthe ... madhyamam).

Hanuman's speech was charming (*citra*) and all the three components (*tristhanavyayanjana*), viz. bodily act, speech and mind's thought were in total harmony (cf. Manasye-kam vacasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam). *Tristhana* here has reference to the major three out of five sources of sound in the human body, viz. *uras* or heart, *kantha* or throat, and *siras* or head (Samgitaratnakara I.iii.3ff). The commentary on Ramayana states that the head as *preraka* or stimulator, heart as *utpadaka* or generator and throat as *prakasaka* or discloser, were in conformity, and for that reason Hanuman's speech was charming. His words would

appease the mind of even an enemy with his sword drawn and with the intention of striking.

#### Ramayana IV.3.28-33

n a r g v e d a v i n i t a s y a  
nayajurvedadharinah

na s a m a v e d a v i d u s a s s a k y a m e v a m  
p r a b h a s i t u m #

n u n a m v y a k a r a n a m k r t s n a m  
a n e n a b a h u d h a s r u t a m

b a h u v y a h a r a t a n e n a n a  
k i m c i d a p a s a b d i t a m #

n a m u k h e n e t r a y o r v a p i l a l a t e  
c a b h r u v o s t a t h a

a n y e s v a p i c a s a r v e s u  
d o s a s s a m v i d i t a h k v a c i t #

a v i s t a r a m a s a n d i g d h a m  
a v i l a m b i t a m a d r u t a m

u r a s t h a m k a n t h a g a m v a k y a m  
v a r t a t e m a d h y a m e s v a r e #

s a m s k a r a k r a m a s a m p a n n a m  
a d r u t a m a v i l a m b i t a m

u c c a r a y a t i k a l y a n i m v a c a m  
h r d a y a h a r s i n i m #

a n a y a c i t r a y a v a c a  
t r i s t h a n a v y a n j a n a s t h a y a

k a s y a n a r a d h y a t e c i t t a m  
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# Science In Scriptures

P. Varadarajan

Scientific temper had been the forte of the Indian sages. They streamlined their thought with their scientific temper. They subjected all their conclusions to the litmus test of reason. They even set off their spiritual doctrine with scientific principles. This is evident in all our scriptures, especially in Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana.

In Srimad Bhagavatam, we find scientific doctrines being used as similes to drive home spiritual ideas. Amazing indeed is the intimate knowledge of science of Sage Vyasa and his skill in availing scientific principles as the foil for spiritual doctrines. It will be a delectable experience to sample some of the *slokas* of Srimad Bhagavatam to picture to ourselves how *Science suffuses through Bhagavatam*.

The composition of Srimad Bhagavatam is ascribed to the exhortation of sage Narada to

sage Vyasa. Having achieved the gargantuan task of streamlining the Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas, Vyasa still gets despondent that he has not completed his mission in life. Then Narada comes to the hermitage of Vyasa and exhorts him to bring about a composition enshrining the glory of Bhagavan Vasudeva to get out of the clutches of his despondency. In the course of his exhortation, sage Narada says:

"O Vyasa of commendable vow, the

*same substance which contributes to a particular malady cannot ordinarily counteract the disease; but, when taken in a properly medicated form, it does cure the ailment. Similarly, all the activities of men ordinarily lead to transmigration; but the same, when offered to the lord, lose their binding character."*

In 1796, a British doctor, Edward Jenner, discovered how inoculation worked. Is it not interesting to know, how in the prehistoric past, Srimad Bhagavatam uses inoculation as the simile to explain the efficacy of human action offered to the Lord?

Passing on to the life history of Prahlada, recounted in Srimad Bhagavatam, Prahlada's father Hiranyakasipu is disturbed by Prahlada's devotion to Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakasipu asks Prahlada's teachers to find out what influence has perverted Prahlada to develop devotion to

**In 1796, a British doctor, Edward Jenner, discovered how inoculation worked. Is it not interesting to know, how in the prehistoric past, Srimad Bhagavatam uses inoculation as the simile to explain the efficacy of human action offered to the Lord?**

Lord Vishnu.

With endearing words, the teachers try to cajole Prahlada into revealing to them what has influenced him to develop devotion to Lord Vishnu.

Explaining his devotion to Lord Vishnu, Prahlada says:

*"Just as a magnetic needle capable of swinging round, is on its own attracted towards the north, I, susceptible to all possible distractions, am automatically attracted towards Lord Vishnu who holds the discus, Sudarsana."*

Around 1100 A.D., the Chinese invented the magnetic compass. It has a magnetic needle fixed to a pivot so that it is free to swing round. The needle always points north, when it is at rest. This is so because the magnetic needle lines up parallel with the Earth's magnetic field. It is amazing that Srimad Bhagavatam uses this property of the magnetic needle as a simile.

Srimad Bhagavatam provides very interesting details of embryology. In the course of his protracted exposition to his mother Devahuti, Lord Kapila says:

*"By force of Karma (destiny), as directed by providence, the soul (destined to be born as a man) enters the womb of a woman through the generative fluid of a man for the formation of a body. In the course of a night, it is integrated by being united with the ovum; and in five nights it is rounded*

*into the shape of a bubble. In a period of ten days it becomes as hard as a plum and later on it develops into the shape of a ball of flesh or an egg (in the case of oviparous creatures)".*

It was in the twentieth century, that scientists discovered that the combination of male and female chromosomes in a zygote, began the process of fertilization. But Lord Kapila refers to it in Srimad Bhagavatam millenia ago.

Sage Vyasa was fully aware of the scientific fact that the sun plays an important role in bringing about rain. Very skillfully he uses this scientific fact as a simile like this.

*"Like the sun sucking the moisture (in summer) and releasing it (during the monsoons) by its rays, a yogi (engaged in the quest of the spirit) enjoys with his senses the objects of the senses and parts with them according to the needs of the moment but is not*

*affected (by the act of enjoyment or gift)."*

Vyasa dwells upon cosmology in Srimad Bhagavatam. In the course of enlightening sage Narada in cosmology, Lord Brahma says:

*"Intent upon becoming many (at the dawn of creation), the Lord of Maya assumed at will (pressed into His Service for the purpose of creation) by His own Maya (deceiving potency), Time, Karma (Destiny of the Jivas) and Swabhava (their innate disposition) that had already existed in a latent form in His being."*

The supreme Lord himself tells Lord Brahma:

*"Prior to this creation I alone existed and that too in my absolute state. Other than Me there was nothing gross or subtle, not the*

*cause of both, viz; Prakrti (Primordial matter). I exist even after creation as well as in the form of this phenomenal world and I am also that which remains (after all this has disappeared)."*

All that Srimad Bhagavatam elaborates concerning cosmology is epitomized in just a single sloka. Yes that sloka is the *locus classicus* of all the slokas treating of cosmology.

*"Just as the spider projecting the web from its heart through mouth, sports with it and then swallows it, so does the supreme Lord create, preserve and destroy the universe."*

What is enshrined in Srimad Bhagavatam is corroborated by the contemporary scientific opinion in this regard.

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Scientists today attribute the creation and the destruction of the universe to the Big Bang and the big crunch. According to these scientists in the beginning, there was no time, there was no space and there was no matter.

The universe sprang from a 'primeval atom' which expanded. Because space was contained within it, this primeval atom could not blow outwards into its surroundings; there was no space outside itself. The expansion of the atom was more like a balloon being blown up. Space itself grew bigger, spreading out like the skin of a balloon. Time began to flow. Matter came into being and was carried away in the expansion of space. The result was the Big Bang.

As to the destruction of the universe, the scientists project that the universe will start to shrink, when it expands to the maximum possible size. In the shrinking universe, the galaxies become crowded together so closely, that they begin to

merge with one another. The stars begin to collide with one another. There would be intense burst of cataclysmic fire. The end of the universe would come in the sudden finality of the big crunch. In the big crunch, the entire universe collapses to such a small size that it can be held in the palm of the hand.

It is very exciting to know that Srimad Bhagavatam uses scientific data about the spider to explain cosmology. The scientists have found out that each web-weaving spider can produce upto seven different kinds of silk for weaving its web. When it has finished with one web, it eats it and uses the materials to make the next one. Vyasa uses this scientific data as an effective simile.

Modern entomologists tell us of the hunting wasp and the caterpillar. A female hunting wasp paralyses a caterpillar using her tail sting, drags it to a breeding nest and lays an egg on it. When the larva hatches, it feeds on the caterpillar to

grow into a wasp. This scientific fact is used very effectively as a simile in Srimad Bhagavatam.

*"On whatever the embodied being deliberately centres its mind in its entirety, through love, hatred or fear, it attains that very form. The larva confined by the wasp in a hole in the wall and contemplating on the wasp, without discarding its former body, transforms itself into the latter."*

Srimad Bhagavatam explains the eternal nature of the Atman using an astronomical fact as the simile:

*"The moon appears to wane and wax, but in reality the moon always remains full without waning and waxing. Similarly the Atman remains eternal, though, because of the body, the Atman appears to be born and die."*

Only two centuries after the father of modern astronomy, Nicolas Copernicus, did the world get to know what we know today, in the field of astronomy. Till the seventeenth century, the Ptolemaic conception of astronomy was in vogue. The scientific knowledge that the waxing and the waning of the moon is just an appearance, is just a couple of centuries old. But Srimad Bhagavatam has used this scientific fact as a simile in the primeval past.

Man has got in him a splendid reflection of what is there in nature. The object of science is to study nature to facilitate man's dovetailing with nature. The aim of spiritualism is to get man to fall to introspection to season himself to suit his position in the cosmic scheme. Thus Nature and Man are what both science and spiritualism focus on. Thus scientific vision forms the foil for the gem of spiritual enquiry.

# Navagraha Temples of Thanjavur

Vatsala Jambunathan

Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu is called the granary of South India. Besides the famous Brihadeeswara temple, and annual music festival of Saint Thyagaraja at Thiruvaiyaru, this region abounds in several small towns scattered on the banks of the Cauvery river. Located in these towns are the famous Navagraha temples.

Each of these nine temples has its own importance. Archaeological evidence suggests that they were built by the Chola and Pandya kings. These Navagraha temples have become centres of pilgrimage for people from all over India. They are built according to the Agama Shastras and are maintained by the Hindu Religious Endowment Board, Tamil Nadu.

The planetary gods occupy an important place in the religious

and cultural history of India. According to popular belief, the planets and their motion have a great influence on human life.

There are seven principal planets which influence the earth, and along with Rahu and Ketu, the gods make up nine. Rahu and Ketu are called dragons and are shadows rather than planets. They orbit in the reverse motion while the planets travel in a forward motion.

Apart from the above-mentioned nine planets, there are twelve zodiac signs or *rasis* and 27 constellations of fixed stars.

These signs form a belt in the heavens of 30 degrees each or 360 degrees in all. The reason why the ancients divided the zodiac into 360 degrees maybe because the Solar Year measures 365 days and the Lunar Year 355, the average of which is 360.

In the Hindu calendar months are named after the signs, and each

year is supposed to begin when the sun enters the first point of Aries (Mesha). The sun moves in Aries for one month at the rate of about one degree per day. Then the second month begins when the sun enters the first degree of Taurus or Vrishabha.

Hence one can draw up the birth chart of an individual from the position of the sun.

The Navagraha stotra invokes these gods:

*Aditya, Somaya,  
Mangalya, Budhyacha;*

*Guru, Sukra,  
Sanibhyasche, Rahave,  
Ketave Namaha.*

In astrological terms the place location of a planet in the horoscope is referred to as the 'Lord of the first house' and so on. Each planet is assigned a rasi and a number. The Sun's rasi is Leo and is in the fifth house. A person's rasi is calculated starting from Mars (Aries, (1) First house), the other positions following it. Specific colours are also indicated.



Shanil the planet Saturn

In all the temples we see the nine idols of the Navagraha placed together on a raised platform. No two planets face each other. At the end of our temple visit we circumambulate the Navagraham one, three or nine time. The above stotra is believed to appease all of them.

It is believed that Lord Siva deputed the Navagrahas to determine each individual's fate, whether good or bad. No one can alter one's fate, but by invoking the Almighty he diminishes the seriousness of the act. Thus the Navagrahas are only the servitors of the Almighty in this job.

A brief description of each temple and its special features:

**Suryanar Koil (Sun temple)** is situated 1 km north of Aduduari, which lies between Kumbakonam (15 km) and Mayiladuthurai (20 km). This place is approachable by

both bus and train. The village is named after the presiding deity the Sun known as Suryan in Tamil.

Lord Surya gives darshan in a standing position. A salient feature of the temple is that the remaining eight planets are installed in separate sanctums within the temple compound.

People begin their pilgrimage to the Navagraha temples from Thirumangalankudi village and then proceed to Suryanar Koil.

The shrine of **Thingaloor** (**Moon**) and the village are located 4 km from Thiruvaiyaru. It can be reached by bus from Thanjavur (10 km) and also from Kumbakonam (35 km) via Swamimalai.

The Moon has a separate sanctum. The main deity is Kilainathar with Goddess Periyanyagi.

**Kujan/Mangal (Mars)** is part of Vaitheeswaran Koil which is situated between Mayavaram (15 km) and Chidambaram (25km) via Sirkazhi.

There is a separate sanctum for Kujan inside the main temple.

The main deities are Vaidyanathar and Thaiyal Nayagi.

This temple is endowed with powers to cure skin and respiratory complaints. The temple tank adjoining the main temple has curative powers. It is believed that a small piece of jaggery when dissolved pleases the deity. Crude salt and pepper are also offered and a portion is given in a pellet form to be eaten by the devotee.

The presiding deity is Lord Muthukumaraswamy (Murugan). A notable feature is the steps leading to the temple are 60 in number referring to the year.

**Budhan (Mercury)** in Thiruvenkadu can be reached by bus from Mayavaram (25 km) and from Sirkali (15 km). Lord Nataraja has a separate sanctum as in Chidambaram. The special deity of this temple is Ahoramoorthy, one of the forms of Lord Siva. The main deities are Swetharanyeswar and Goddess Bramha Vidyambika. Special mention is made about this temple in the Tamil literature *Saiva Thirumurai* and the sastras. It is believed that a visit to this temple has the same benefit as to Kasi and people bathe in the several ghats

located around the temple and perform the rituals for the departed souls.

**Guru or Jupiter's** shrine is in Alangudi, which can be reached by bus from Thanjavur (35 km) via Needamangalam. Also from Kumbakonam (15 km) via Valangaiman.

The main deities are Sri Abathsahayar and his consort, Aelavarkuzhalai.

The shrine of **Sukran** or **Venus** is in Kanjanoor which is 2 km east of Suryanar Koil. It can be reached from Mayavaram (20 km) via Kadiramangalam and also from Kumbakonam (18 km) via Veppatur.

It is a very small temple built amidst paddy fields. A special feature is there is no separate sanctum for Sukran. It is believed that the Lord is in Agni form and hence is called Agnipureswarar. He is also known to bless his devotees as Sukradev. Main deity is Agnipureswarar and Goddess Karpagamibikai.

**Sani or Saturn** in Thirunallar is 5 km from Karaikal and can be reached by bus from Mayavaram

(30 km) or from Kumbakonam (45 km). A separate sanctum is provided for Sani. The lingam is made of emerald.

Main Deity: Darbaranyeswarar. Goddess Bhogamatha Ponmulaiyal (smiling face).

The **Rahu** shrine is in **Thirunageswaram** just 6 km from Kumbakonam. The special feature of this temple is that when milk is poured (*abhishekam*) on Rahu, the colour of milk changes into blue.

The main deities are Shenbakarnyeswarar and Goddess Srigirujambal.

The **Ketu** shrine is in **Khiza perumpallam**, situated 2 km south of Darmakulam, on the Mayavaram – Poompuhar (5 km) route. The main deities are Sri Naganathaswamy and Goddess Soundaryanayagi.

A Rahu-Ketu shrine is located at Kalahasthi in Andhra Pradesh, 40 km from Tirupathi on the Renigunata – Chennai railway line.

The presiding deities are Srikalathinathar and Goddess Sri Gnana Poongothai.

# **Yoga and Its**

## **Cosmic Relevance-3**

Ravi Varma

There are several grades of *Samadhi* depending upon the degree of absorption. *Samadhi* is a super-conscious state and is better experienced than explained. Descriptions of the experiences in *Samadhi* can, at best, be memories filtering down to the normal consciousness state. Broadly, *Samadhi* is of two types viz. *sabija* (with seed) and *nirbija* (seedless). The highest state yogis can normally reach is the *nirvikalpa* (*nirbija*) *samadhi* which is stated to be the nearest approach of human beings to the state of *paramatma* (God). In such a state, there is no consciousness of a separate

***Samadhi is a super-conscious state and is better experienced than explained.***

object. It is however not a void, because, there is pure positive consciousness.

Readers will, no doubt, recall the *Mundaka Upanishad* depicting the gradual progress and merger of the *jivatma* in the *paramatma* through the metaphor of two beautiful birds on a poppala tree. The duration and depth of *samadhi* would depend, to an extent, on aspiration and repeated effort but would seem to be decided largely by God's Grace (available through the *Guru*). Anyway, *samadhi* even of short duration, is found to bring about a total change in the individual's outlook and actions. One can perhaps say

that the role of the individual stops at this stage, with the Divine taking charge.

Patanjali speaks

also about *Dharma Megha Samadhi* completing spiritual evolution and leading to Kaivalya but this is of no great interest to the normal seeker.

It is interesting to note that even at an advanced stage of spiritual progress, the ego does not become totally extinct as earlier assumed by many. It is now accepted widely that though the ego may become purified, attenuated and subdued, it does not cease to exist. This has been confirmed by the findings of Samarth Guru Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur(U.P.), a great spiritual leader of our times.

Let us now see what happens to the *jivatmas* of people reaching the highest spiritual development. It is said that some (very few) get

*Any way, samadhi even of short duration, is found to bring about a total change in the individual's outlook and actions.*

immediate liberation (*sadyo mukti*) and they merge in the Cosmos. Others who

have not reached that stage, get progressive liberation (*krama mukti*) and proceed (after death of course) to *devayana* also known as *Uttarayana* or the Northern path. The *Jivatmas* of people who live without any spiritual desire and effort, go to *pitravyana* also called *dakshinayana* (Southern path) and are destined to have rebirth. The wish to die in *Uttarayana* (Northern solstice, approximately 6 months from mid-January) is traceable to this belief. Even Bhishma had such a wish, according to the *Mahabharata*. One cannot call it superstition considering the vital links the sun has with the earth. A few become *jivanmuktas* (liberated while living) leading their earthly life as divine robots and as *ichhamrtyus* (capable of

वेदोऽखिले धर्ममूलम् । वेदो नित्यमयीयताम् । वेदाः वर्य वः चरणं प्रपद्माः । वेदा ये नः परं धनम् ।



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choosing the time of their physical death).

In retrospect, we observe Creation as God's sport, the generation of the illusion of separateness between the creatures leading to desires, motivating actions, followed by reactions and lives of transient happiness and misery; the generation of a desire to get back home free from miseries and other problems created by the mind; the use of the mind as a means to free it from itself; the lifting of illusions during the return journey (Yoga comes at this stage); transfer of focus from material to spiritual development and an ultimate happy return home and realisation of the essential unity of everything in the Cosmos. Yoga makes this return journey successful in a gradual and natural way. It is all part of the

Cosmic Play, planned and executed by God through His own creatures.

Some brief comments on a few aspects of Yoga practice would be appropriate before we conclude this essay. First is the general tendency, often found in recent writings and discourses on spirituality, to lay undue emphasis on *vairagya* (dispassion) and *moksha* (liberation) as though life in this world is the result of some curse and needs to be got rid of as quickly as possible! This stems from an improper understanding of the Cosmic Plan. It is a disservice to encourage any premature *vairagya* in young minds. What is needed is not to advise to

hate or run away from life but to encourage participation in life wisely and actively but without getting too much

**It is said that by merging the consciousness of the disciple with his own consciousness, the *Guru* and the disciple can together perceive the truth which is sought to be communicated.**

entangled, availing of it as an opportunity to gain maturity, purity and perfection. There is much wisdom in the Indian tradition envisaging the four stages of life (*brahmacharya, grahastya, vanaprastha and sanyasa*) and recognising the four *purusharthas* (*dharma, artha, kama and moksha*). What nature envisages seems to be a gradual growth to perfection and not ignorant, even if well-motivated, short-cuts leading to distortions and atrophy of personality.

The second is the vital role of the *Guru* (Preceptor) in spiritual development. A *Guru* is not like one who teaches in a school or college, communicating information verbally. He is a total guide operating through the heart than through the head properly remoulding the disciples, acting as an agent and instrument of the Divine. The potent spiritual force of the *Guru* is infused into the less purified and less potent

disciple. Transfer of experience is much more important than intellectual explanations. It is said that by merging the consciousness of the disciple with his own consciousness, the *Guru* and the disciple can together perceive the truth which is sought to be communicated. Indian spiritual tradition tells us that all spiritual leaders had their *Gurus*. There may be very rare instances like that of Ramana Maharshi who attained high spiritual levels with no known *Guru*. In a well-known verse in the *Skanda Purana*, the *Guru* is described as *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Siva* rolled into one, which reflects the high place assigned to the *Guru*. It is worth mentioning in this connection, that in India, the full moon day in the month of *Ashadha* is known as *Guru Purnima*. Self-effort is most essential but that by itself does not take aspirants to very high levels spiritually. The *Guru's* direct

help is also most essential for avoidance of wrong paths and to surmount obstacles at the higher levels of spiritual development. A feeling of selflessness and total surrender to the *Guru* helps a great deal, as, it would weaken the ego, the great obstacles to spiritual development.

I conclude this brief survey by offering my respectful salutations to those realised souls found here and there,

throughout human history who did not or do not choose to remain in their meditative cocoons or seek immediate liberation but, out of love and sympathy for the struggling souls, rendered and continue to render guidance and help, drawing strength from the inexhaustible Cosmic sources of energy. These guides and teachers are also obviously part of the Divine Plan.

*(To be continued)*

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A Story

# Eye to Eye

Rita Nath

"I told you," said Mrs. Roy to her husband hiding behind the Sunday newspaper. Dr. Roy's voice trembled as he spoke: "Told me what, my dear?"

Mrs. Roy glared at her husband and raised her eyebrows: "You need not act innocent. You are forever trying to avoid the issue of Pushpa's marriage. I had told you that if she gets an M. Phil. Degree in

art history no one will marry her. She is independent and reliable but she cannot continue with her single status".

Dr. Roy smiled affably and said: "You mean to say that M. Phil. Degree in art history is an obstacle to her marriage? My daughter has a permanent teaching job in a prestigious public school with handsome pay and perks. She is strikingly



beautiful and enjoys an untarnished reputation". Dr. Roy took off his spectacles and looked at his wife.

"If you are referring to the Guptas then I will state that Pushpa has done nothing wrong in rejecting their son. He has a terrible stammer." Dr. Roy raised his voice.

Mrs. Roy didn't reply and walked out of the house to speak to her neighbour Mrs. Mathur who had called out to her. Both ladies felt that their husbands were not worldly-wise and this drawback would prevent their daughters from being suitably married.

"I do everything to find eligible grooms and my husband does not even counsel my daughter. The duo think that they are above social conventions. What if the boy stammers? After all he is an executive engineer in a PSU and has everything else in his favour", Mrs. Roy's voice choked with emotion.

"It is the same here," sniffed Mrs. Mathur. "Why did I let Manisha do a master's

programme in social work? Now she wants to spend her life among slum-dwellers."

It was true that Pushpa had excelled in her subject and won laurels but she had ended up as school teacher. If God so wills then she will also end up a spinster, mused Mrs. Roy as she hurried towards the kitchen.

She saw that the milk had boiled over. She cleaned up the mess, made straight for her daughter's room and saw Pushpa sharing a joke with her father. Mrs. Roy seethed with anger at Pushpa's indifference to housework.

Dr. Roy suddenly turned around and said: "Do not worry about today's kitchen incident. Your daughter is going to manage her own kitchen very soon".

Mrs. Roy sneered at this comment then stopped short as the significance of these words sank in. "What do you mean? You did not tell me anything in the garden. Rather you behaved as though Pushpa's marriage did not matter".

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Dr. Roy chuckled to himself and explained: "Had I told you anything in the garden then the whole neighbourhood would have known immediately. Well, the Guptas who had seen Pushpa three months back sent a formal marriage proposal".

Mrs. Roy could have been knocked down with a feather. As she recovered from this stunning news a nagging doubt raised its ugly head. "Why did they take three months to decide about Pushpa? Are you sure that the family is reliable?"

Dr. Roy made his wife sit down. She was trembling with anxiety and could only cling to her husband. He soothed her by explaining that the groom's family was in a jubilant mood and wanted to hold the engagement ceremony the next week. He assured her that there was no cause for tension.

But his wife said apologetically: "You cannot understand my worries. However, tell me how the Guptas decided in our favour. I was under the impression that they

had rejected us. How did your princess of a daughter accept this stammering boy?"

Dr. Roy patted his wife on the shoulder and addressed her as the captain of the ship. He asked her to organise everything for the engagement ceremony.

The day of the engagement ceremony dawned bright and beautiful. Mrs. Roy was specially happy because for once Pushpa listened to everything she said and behaved impeccably.

Mrs. Roy supervised everything and was pleased with the fact that everyone praised the decoration and the catering service. The groom's father Mr. Gupta even folded his hands and spoke deferentially: "Madam, we are sorry about the short notice we gave you but our family pundit fixed to-day for the occasion".

After the departure of the last guest Mrs. Roy was surprised to see Abhinav Gupta and his family staying back.

Dr. Roy cleared his throat and said to his wife: "We must now answer your questions about how

this match was fixed. Well, I was quite prepared for one more rejection when Mr. Gupta's letter reached me. He requested me to come and see him urgently."

Now everybody turned towards Mr. Gupta who was obviously lapping up all the attention. Then he began to speak: "Dr. Roy naturally hurried over to see me. I told him that we should go to a nearby restaurant and talk things over." Mr. Gupta paused for breath.

Mrs. Roy pleaded with him to continue the story. He said that the whole credit went to his wife. He requested her to narrate her part of the story.

Mrs. Gupta fiddled with the pallu of her heavy brocade sari then cleared her throat: "My son was a constant problem for us. Whenever I took him along to see a girl he would get himself disqualified somehow or the other. His excuses were quite varied: either a strange disease, or demotion or his plans of taking sanyas. The girl's family would automatically steer clear of him." Mrs. Gupta coughed.

Then she smiled and continued: "When I saw Pushpa the first time I was a little disappointed by the squint in her right eye. I thought that Pushpa, a doctor's daughter, should not mar her life with this mild squint. A minor operation could rectify this problem. So I went to her school after a month. She did not recognise me as I had disguised myself."

When the laughter died away, Mr. Gupta narrated how they had trooped down to Pushpa's school. Mrs. Gupta continued, "I was delighted to see that Pushpa had perfect almond-shaped eyes. Then I realised that like Abhinav this girl chased off unpleasant suitors with a variety of tricks. I was convinced that they would be truly compatible".

Abhinav looked at everybody sheepishly and said: "I went along with mom, Bhabhi and my niece Neha to Pushpa's school totally innocent of what was brewing. I approached some of the teachers for my niece's admission and quite inadvertently saw Pushpa. I fell

madly in love with her."

Dr. Roy's face lit up and he waited for him to continue but Mr. Gupta interrupted: "Our son became obediently yours and told his mom that he was ready to marry her soon. He wanted us to reopen the case for him, but we refused at first."

The doorbell rang and the Mathur family trooped in.

"Hello," Manisha greeted everybody. "Is Abhinav finally letting the cat out of the bag? There was an outburst of merry laughter but Manisha's story stunned everybody into silence: "When Abhinav's parents stepped back from this scenario he was crestfallen. Then he approached me one fine morning and confessed everything. He was so earnest that I could even order him to jump through fire."

"Papa, Manisha has played a vital role in convincing me. Abhinav's solitary efforts would not have melted the ice so soon," Pushpa confessed coyly.

After about three weeks the two fathers decided to swoop down on the two cooing doves.

"When our fathers actually caught us red-handed Abhinav starts stammering genuinely. He did not realise then that our parents had outwitted us. Once the mystery was cleared he became so fluent and voluble that I had to stop my ears", Pushpa recalled those moments with glee.

"Now it is my turn to get astonished. Thank the Lord for Pushpa's squint and Abhinav's stuttering. Their play acting has saved them from tying the knot with the wrong persons. I am sure that Pushpa never imagined that her histrionics would lead her to her dream man," gushed Mrs Mathur.

"In fact I was winnowing the grains to remove the husk", came Pushpa's impish reply. After this grand finale the guests took their leave.

After the last guest had left, Dr. Roy gave his wife a big hug. "By the way, my dear, I have a special gift of a Benarasi sari for you," he said benevolently. "To make up for keeping you in the dark for so long."

# Krishna and Human Relations - 33

Harindra Dave



The creative artist that he was, Mahakavi Vyasa was an experimentalist too. He has in fact narrated his own family history in Mahabharata. Dhrutarashtra, Pandu and Vidura are his own progeny. He, too, is one of the characters of the Drama. He has described the huge battle of Mahabharata step-by-step to the readers.

In the beginning of 'Bhishma Parva' Vyasa meets Dhrutarashtra and offers him the divine eyesight with which he could witness the terrible battle that was going to take place on Kurukshetra. But Dhrutarashtra did not want to witness the killings of his own kith and kin. He was born blind and now he

was not prepared have the divine eyesight, just to witness the destruction of his own race. But at the same time, he was very anxious to know the happenings in the war. Hence, Vyas gifted the divine sight to Sanjay, who would be able to see everything — all the concealed and the apparent happenings that would take place during the war. He would also be able to see the happenings during the day as well as night. He would never get tired of seeing continuously and no weapon would ever be able to touch him or harm him and he would be saved from the super war !

After this, Vyas describes the seriousness of war to

Dhrutarashtra:

कालोऽयं पुत्रस्तपेण तव जातो विद्यां पदे।  
न वधः पूज्यते वेदे हितं नैतकथंचन॥

(Bhishma - 4 ; 5)

"God of death himself has been born to you in the form of a son. According to the Vedas, killing is considered an art which is neither admired nor is advantageous."

...and what sort of destruction had Duryodhana started ? It was a destruction that was not required and the destruction that could have been avoided.

Vyasa depicts king Dhrutarashtra's hypocritical behaviour very well. He outwardly shows his helplessness but within his heart he does not want to forgo his rights as a king and hence wants a war. No doubt he had tried to persuade his stubborn son Duryodhana to avert the war but that was duplicity. Dhrutarashtra was repeatedly warned and was told that victory was where

Krishna was, but he had ignored it. He still had confidence in the army of Duryodhana and from within he also believed he would win, as they had warriors like Bhishma, Drona, Karna and many others on their side.

But Vyasa shatters this disillusion of Dhrutarashtra and says :

न बाहुल्येन सेनाया जयो भवति भारत।  
अधूतो हि जयो नाम दैवं चात्र परायणम्।  
जयन्त्वा ह्यपि संग्रामे क्षयवन्तो भवन्त्युत॥

(Bhishma. 4;35)

"A big army does not necessarily mean a victory. Victory is an uncertainty and it is in the hands of destiny: because, many times, those who deserve to be victorious get defeated in the battle."

These words of Vyasa conveys everything.

Now the dialogue between Dhrutarashtra and Sanjay takes place. But in some way, Dhrutarashtra wanted to divert his mind from the whole situation. His sons were not under his control and they had disobeyed him;

and this he had already complained to his father Vyasa, and had confessed :

स्वार्थं हि संमृद्ध्यति तात लोकोऽ।  
मां चापि लोकाभ्यमेव विद्धि॥

(Bhishma. 4; 11)

"Oh ! father, when it comes to one's self-interest, people become delusioned and infatuated, and I have become one."

Had Dhrutarashtra been an extraordinary person, perhaps he would have been able to persuade his sons and have brought them back from the path of war. When he realised that the victory of his sons was not sure, he wanted to divert his mind and justify his point view; and so he said: "For 'the infatuation of their land, kings have to forgo their attachment for life and have to kill others to retain their land, their property."

He continues :

"Looking at this fact, one is bound to feel that mother earth possesses some innate quality due to which one feels

like sacrificing for her. Sanjay, now that you have the divine sight, describe to me this innate quality that the mother earth possesses."

Here, Sanjay tells the story of 'Utkranti'(theory of evolution.)

'Animals are of two kinds: immovable and movable. Mobile animals are again of three kinds. (1) those born out of eggs; (2) out of perspiration and (3) out of womb. (viviparous). Out of these, those born out of the womb are the best of animals like lion, tiger, hog, wolf and monkey. These seven are the creatures of the jungle; while human-beings, cow, goat, sheep, horse, mule and donkey; these seven are creatures of civilization.

To these fourteen, five immovables are added: like grass, vegetables, trees etc. and the number increases to nineteen. To these, five 'Maha Bhuta'—earth-water-fire-wind-sky — are added and the number reaches

twenty four; like the twenty four words of Gayatri Mantra, this earth is also Gayatri, made up of twenty four 'Bhutas' (substances).

भूमी हि जायते सर्वं भूमौ सर्वं प्रणश्यति।  
भूमिः प्रतिष्ठा भूतानां भूमिरेव परायणम्॥

**(Bhishma : 5 ;20)**

"All are born out of earth, all perish into earth. It is the earth that firmly stabilises all

the living creatures and it is this earth that is the refuge of all the living beings.

"It is for this earth, for possessing this land that the mortal beings always fight the battles and do the killings and destruction."

Very emphatically Sanjay tells this story.

*(To be continued)*

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Doctor Speaks

## Societal Dharma (Obligations)

Prof. B.M.Hegde

Trouble started for man from the day the monetary economy was conceived. Today money is our God and making money is our religion. Nothing else really matters. The goal thus achieved, the means do not seem to bother us any more.

Man started living in groups, mostly on the banks of rivers, close to fertile ground. This is the beginning of the present concept of a society. Having been a hunter-gatherer until then, he took to ploughing the field to increase the yield of food to feed all the members of the society, the real beginning of altruism. Until then he lived only on food that grew on the land, in addition



Adam Smith

to the animals he hunted. In such a society, our ancestors followed the dharma (obligations) of a just order. Even food distribution was equitable, bearing in mind the varied needs of different sections of the people. Pregnant ladies got relatively better food and the old and the infirm were spared the burden of sharing in the gathering of food.

Although there was the stress

of living in such unfriendly surroundings, not knowing where their next meal would come from, the camaraderie and the sense of belonging in such large groups (families) must have more than offset any distressful effects of the environment.

Maybe, according to the present concept, our forefathers did not set the river Ganga on fire in the areas of science and technology, but neither are our ultimate achievements in the same fields much to write home about, even today. Our palpable gains are not a match for the negative fall-out of the same science and technology. The inhuman qualities of head and heart that the present era seems to have awakened in us, threaten to be the forerunners of our doom! It was Emerson who wrote that, "if the human race were to have an end it shall certainly be through the present-

**Recently many scientific studies have shown that negative human feelings like greed, jealousy, hatred and anger are at the root of all human illnesses and misery; while love, camaraderie, compassion and altruism could even reverse disease!**

day civilization". One could not agree more. He has hit the bull's eye.

The earlier we reverse this trend, the better for mankind. Trouble started for man from the day the monetary economy was conceived. Today money is our God and making money is our religion. Nothing else really matters. The goal thus achieved, the means do not seem to bother us any more. When society respects only money, the younger generation, nay all of us, are in a hurry to make it big fast, irrespective of what we do. Ethics and good manners are things of the past.



Ralph W. Emerson



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Fair means to earn money are also forgotten. In this game merit and authenticity are the two prime casualties.

All the crime in society is connected directly or indirectly to money. Greed, passion, pride and ego play the most dominant role in our lives; consequently, society as a whole suffers with the less endowed and less fortunate being the worst victims of this new mania.

There is at least one scientific study that has proved the point about money being at the root of all our troubles. "Failure of Scientific Medicine — the Innu Community Study", was published in the *Journal of Canadian Family Physicians* a year ago.

The Innus were an aboriginal race living in a group of islands off the coast of Saskatchewan in Canada. The Innus lived long and had hardly any major illness in their natural habitat. Their end came usually because of old age. Centenarians were a common sight. Their subsistence economy was egalitarian. They lived like

a large family without any dependence or fear, except that of predation. Their problems started first in 1732 AD when a priest from mainland Canada brought the love of God and consequent dependence. Years later came the Williams Company dealing in hide to teach the Innu the barter trade. Eventually the monetary economy came to Innuland when they became citizens of Canada.

With the onset of monetary economy, life totally changed for the Innu. Now they have all the conceivable diseases that a Canadian Caucasian is prone to, but about ten to twenty years prematurely. These illnesses could be traced back to the introduction of the monetary economy and acculturation. Recently many scientific studies have shown that negative human feelings like greed, jealousy, hatred and anger are at the root of all human illnesses and misery; while love, camaraderie, compassion and altruism could even reverse disease! Man, perforce, acquires all the negative

feelings in a society that respects only money. Most societies have given a go-by to ethics and authenticity as yardsticks for respect and have,

instead, replaced them with money or things that money can buy.

Most societies have modified their educational systems to suit the present philosophy of dog-eat-dog. Knowledge and arrogance have replaced wisdom and humility, which were the catch-phrases in the education of yore. We have very few true seekers in the educational institutions. We have instead, degree-crazy youth in a hurry to get labelled, to start earning money by fair means or foul. Adam Smith's original definition of total education as that process which prepares a man to "act

**The real education should be of the midwifery type where the teacher makes the student want to learn for himself, bringing to surface the best that is already in him, just as the midwife, standing by the side of the pregnant mother in labour, encourages her, coaxes her and cajoles her to make her deliver the baby.**

*j u s t l y ,  
skillfully,  
a n d  
magnanimously  
under all  
circumstances  
of peace and  
war" no  
longer holds  
good. We  
now have the  
banking type  
of education*

where text books are printed like coins in a mint and the printed knowledge (not wisdom) is deposited in the students' head to be used to earn a living, just as people deposit currency notes printed in the mint in their bank accounts for day-to-day living! The real education should be of the *midwifery type* where the teacher makes the student want to learn for himself, bringing to surface the best that is already in him, just as the midwife, standing by the side of the pregnant mother, encourages her, coaxes her and cajoles her to make her deliver the baby. This really inculcates humility in the

student and makes him realize that wisdom is truly humble because it knows no more!

Another area of society that makes man inhuman is the game of power, mostly political power that gives one an edge over the millions of his countrymen. We have over the years built institutions, basically to empower the powers-that-be to ride roughshod over everyone else in society. Be it democracy, aristocracy, plutocracy, autocracy or communism, the system is so built that it is advantageous to those in power. They would then mould it to get what they want under all circumstances of peace and war. The four pillars that the so-called democracy has built around it

— the parliament, the judiciary, the media, and the bureaucracy — each has its own agenda to safeguard its self-interest and rights, least concerned about the hapless victims in society, the common man. Elections are but a farce in truth; the cunning politicians could easily manipulate them. The politicians are a special class the world over that “make even murder look respectable” and get away with it. While they normally promise a bridge even where there is no river, “they could give solidity even to pure air”.

Ritualistic religion is another fraud on the public. While in theology all religions preach the same philosophy of universal love, and each one is



full of wonderful ideals, in practice they hate one another, basically because the rituals built around each religion are done to safeguard the individual ambitions of the leaders and give them power to manipulate the poor people. Obviously the more people they have in their fold the better for them! There is no religion that I know of that preaches hatred. All of them, without exception, have such laudable ideals that any religion could be as good as any other, provided one uses religion for his personal development and happiness. When religion is used as a surrogate method to have power over others, the problem for society starts. How I wish each one of us understood his own religion in-depth and to love other religions equally well.

One at times wonders if it is good to have a sober society that follows all the norms of good

behaviour! That life might become monotonous and boring in such a set-up, would be a good argument against the above line of thinking. If one were to extend this thinking a little further and vote for continuing the present "civilization", there would be no future for mankind. Today even high school students in the West, aged around fifteen, settle individual scores with guns! Young children, starved of parental love, turn to drugs and tobacco. This kind of moral dichotomy cannot and must not last long. We need transparency in our dealings. We must not just be authentic but appear to be authentic as well, for the future good of mankind and to save it from annihilation, as predicted by Emerson. Love all to live well.

*Dr. Hegde is the Vice-Chancellor of the Manipal Academy of Higher Education and the Chairman of the Bhavan's Mangalore Kendra*

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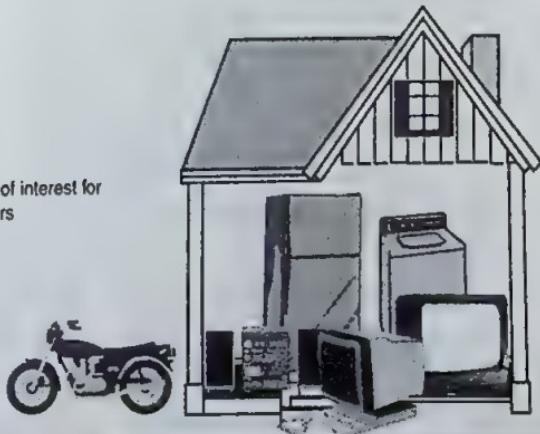
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The Guiding Star

# The Mango

Vaidya Suresh Chaturvedi

The mango tree, on the whole, is considered an auspicious tree and helps to keep the environment free from pollution.

**M**ango is a well-known and well-liked fruit available all over India as well as various countries of the world.

There are many varieties found nationally and internationally. Mangoes are available mainly in the summer and rainy season. Nowadays due to advancements in horticulture, we can get mangoes in every season, anywhere.

Mangoes are used in a variety of ways and in different preparations.

**Raw Mangoes :** Mangoes, when raw, are sour in taste. They are good appetite stimulants and also help in digestion of food. Juice obtained from boiled raw mangoes, mixed with required amount of sugar or jaggery and pinch of cardamom powder is useful as an appetizer and in

sunstroke and nausea. It also proves useful in treating enlargement of the spleen.

Powder of dried raw mangoes (*amchur*) is commonly used to enhance the taste of food. A variety of pickles are made from raw mangoes. A sweet made from raw/ripe mangoes in sugar syrup is very tasty and is an appetite stimulant.

**Ripe Mango :** The colour of mango changing from green to yellow or orange points to a ripened fruit. Ripe mangoes should be soaked in water for some time before using or keeping in refrigerator.

## Uses

- ◆ Mango with milk is very palatable. It stimulates the blood circulation. It also helps the nervous system and tones up the muscles.

**The leaves are considered sacred and used in religious functions. The garlands of leaves with marigold flowers are also used to adorn main doors on various festivals and religious occasions.**

- ◆ Drinking one cup of milk after eating mangoes strengthens the muscles.
- ◆ Regular but limited use of mangoes helps in liver disorders, chronic stomach and intestinal diseases, T.B. and piles.
- ◆ Mango taken with a little cardamom is useful for gaining weight and body development.
- ◆ Mango is rich in proteins and Vitamins A and B, so it is a good tonic.
- ◆ Mango, applied in limited amounts, brightens the skin and makes the face smooth and fresh.

**Mango Papad :** It is very easy to prepare mango papad. Spread mango juice over a piece of cloth in a steel plate and let it dry in sun.

**Excess Use of Mangoes :** This will lead to many ailments, namely indigestion, dull appetite, blood diseases, heaviness in abdomen, gastric trouble and heat disorders

like boils. Those suffering from fever, cold, cough, asthma, diarrhoea and diabetes should avoid use of mangoes.

It is advisable to eat the small locally available, juicy mangoes as they are easily digestible and light on the stomach.

**Mango Seed :** The seed obtained from inside the stone of mango when dried and powdered is useful in treating diarrhoea and dysentery in children. Mango seed when eaten after roasting keeps the intestines functioning normally.

**Mango Leaves :** The leaves are considered sacred and used in religious functions. The garlands of leaves with marigold flowers are also used to adorn main doors on various festivals and religious occasions.

The mango tree, on the whole, is considered an auspicious tree and helps to keep the environment free from pollution.

Bhavan's Book of the Fortnight

# Shri Satya-Purva

## 100 poems by a child

B. Y. Apurva

**S**hri Satya-Purva is 14-year-old B. Y. Apurva's maiden work of poetry in English. She also writes in Hindi.

There is a saying that the thoughts of children echo the thoughts of divinity. There is ample evidence for it in this lovely collection of poems.

Apurva has displayed a remarkable flair for poetry since the tender age of seven. Her collection of poems show a n empathy for nature and the environment. Apurva's relationship with the people around her and her sense of joy

at new discoveries form the focal point of many of the poems.

Apurva's poems have been published in the Young World - Kaleidoscope in *the Hindu*. Her Hindi poems have appeared in Hindi newspapers and in the school magazine.

A student of Bhavan's BHEL Public School at Hyderabad, she has presented a programme of her own poems on A.I.R., Chennai in Talent Corner Buds and Blossoms, during 96-97.





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World of Books

# Northeast: A Dream Turns A Nightmare

M. V. Kamath

This book is a serious study of the situation in the Northeast — that includes Bangladesh. And no better man could have been found to write about the area and its people than Sanjoy Hazarika who was born in Shillong, once capital of undivided Assam and has set up a Centre for Northeastern Studies and Policy Research in Delhi. Hazarika knows what he is talking about and this study is full of facts and figures of large-scale and often surreptitious migrations, demographic changes and resultant tensions.

**Rites of Passage: Border Crossings, Imagined Homelands, India's East and Bangladesh; Sanjoy Hazarika; Penguin Books, Delhi; Pages 347; Rs. 295/-.**

**C**irca 1930. A visitor to Mumbai would have had no difficulty in

identifying the city's varied castes, creeds and communities. Parsi men and women dressed differently from the rest. One could identify a Marwari from his turban, a Maharashtrian from his headwear and practically every ethnic or religious group could be identified one way or

the other. It is the year 2001. The situation has changed. Walk down Mumbai's streets. The men seem to wear the same uniform black pants and coloured bushcoats and the women, especially the younger women, invariably wear *salwar kameez*. Times have changed. Without anybody being consciously aware of it, their identities are slowly merging. People are slowly, but inevitably becoming one. And they would be surprised if someone told them so.

Now imagine a South Asia where partition had not broken up an India into India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Fancy an India of pre-independence times when there was one Bengal and one Assam, and there was free movement of people. Had that unity lasted, had there been a vast pouring in of indigenous and foreign capital in what would have been India's East, the story would in all probability have been different. Slowly, always slowly, differences between Hindus and Muslims, between

Bengalis and Assamese and within Assam between various tribes may have dissolved. Urbanisation would have helped in unifying people.

That sadly, remains a dream. The actual situation is a nightmare. What we call India's Northeast is divided into seven states – the Seven Sisters – and nearly 350 distinct communities, large and small. According to Sanjoy Hazarika who hails from the 'Northeast' (a label he says he personally dislikes), "all this may sound and seem quaint, yet, behind this romantic veil of social co-existence is a witches' brew of suspicion and hatred which has destroyed the concord and social compacts which have existed here for generations, where one side adjusted to the concerns of the other".

This book is a serious study of the situation in the Northeast — that includes Bangladesh. And no better man could have been found to write about the area and its people than Sanjoy Hazarika who was born in Shillong, once capital of

**Why would one want to leave the country of one's birth? Religious harassment, in the first place. Several million Hindus could not take Islamic persecution any longer in Bangladesh and so migrated to the nearest land mass they could easily make it to: Assam. Poverty, another good reason.**

undivided Assam and has set up a Centre for Northeastern Studies and Policy Research in Delhi. Hazarika knows what he is talking about and this study is full of facts and figures of large-scale and often surreptitious migrations, demographic changes and resultant tensions.

Had India not been partitioned as it was on religious lines, there would still have been tensions, but at least they would probably have been governable. Probably. One can never be sure because when communities, deeply conscious of their identities and rooted in one particular geographical area feel threatened, violence should be expected. That, for example, is what happened in Nellie. It may be deeply regretted, but it is understandable, human nature

being what it is. Nobody likes outsiders to walk in and establish themselves in what is perceived as one's own area of influence. After centuries, the Scots in the United Kingdom want their own parliament as do the Welsh, despite all the inter-mingling and urbanisation. Hazarika says that "for years, the middle-of-the-road *Asomiya* (the term embracing all the people of the Brahmaputra Valley who profess Hinduism and Islam, both speaking Assamese or a dialect of it), had been fed up of the growing political influence and clout of settlers from outside". And can anyone blame them for it? But what is the answer to their genuine — and often heart-rending — grievances? Violence has been tried, leading to much bloodshed. All kinds of

suggestions have been made. But what does one do when 'migration' is so easy — sometimes one has only to cross a river at sundown to move from

**There is a human tragedy in the Northeast and there are no quick and easy solutions. Bangladesh is not going to be less Islamic or less intolerant just because we want it to be so. It may take decades for Bangladesh to be prosperous so that its people won't have any desire to migrate.**

Bangladesh to Assam? The Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad is quoted as saying that people who are determined to leave their country for other places for whatever reasons will go to incredible lengths to achieve their objectives. But why would one want to leave the country of one's birth? Religious harassment, in the first place. Several million Hindus could not take Islamic persecution any longer in Bangladesh and so migrated to the nearest land mass they could easily make it to: Assam. Poverty, another good reason. The target of the Bangladeshi poor and harassed, both Hindu

and Muslim, is just not Assam but includes other states as well as West Bengal.

West Bengal has a border of more than 2,400 kms

with Bangladesh. There is no way that this border can be policed. According to available statistics, 1.72 million Bangladeshis crossed illegally into India between 1961 and 1971 and another half a million between 1971 and 1981 while not less than 600,000 crossed into Assam between 1981 and 1991. For every one illegal migrant caught, four got through. Hazarika says that "an international regime to manage migration, or aimed at an orderly movement of peoples could possibly be an agenda of the future or even today". Some hope. What can one possibly do when Bangladeshis can walk into

Tripura every day to work as rickshaw pullers or daily labourers and go home by nightfall? Hazarika reports a former BSF official recalling cases when he allowed people to come across the border to watch a popular Hindi movie at the local cinema in Tripura because there was no cinema hall in that part of Bangladesh. Said the official: "They would come and then melt away into the darkness as they went home". Shifting sands, creation of new islands in the turbulent river, make even demarcation of boundaries difficult.

And, according to the Director-General of the Border Security Force, Bangladeshi Muslims now dominate not less than five to ten kilometres of territory inside the West Bengal border, along Bangladesh. What does one do? Shoot them? There is no immediate answer to any of these problems. The Assamese very rightly complain because they know where the shoe pinches. And they would be

thankful to their fellow Indians for not reading lectures to them.

There is a human tragedy in the Northeast and there are no quick and easy solutions. Bangladesh is not going to be less Islamic or less intolerant just because we want it to be so. It may take decades for Bangladesh to be prosperous so that its people won't have any desire to migrate. And the good lord alone knows when various communities will slowly integrate with each other to form a homogeneous people.

Meanwhile the problem of border crossings, of 'imagined homelands' remains with us as a daily irritation. Life goes on. Hazarika has presented the problem in all its intricacies. Perhaps a confederation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh would help in making life easier for the people of all three states. To know the problem is not to get an instant solution. Sometimes, one must let time to resolve what seem like insoluble problems. That sounds like a cliché but even a cliché can embody a wholesome truth.

# “Desi” and “Marga” of Indian Literature

V.N.Narayanan

For centuries Sanskrit was in the frontyard of Indian literature. People spoke a variety of languages but the mark of scholarship was determined by the ability to write Sanskrit. ... The classics in Sanskrit could be called the *marga*—the royal highway. English has replaced Sanskrit as the frontyard *marga* though it is yet to produce anything by way of a classic that can survive even half a century of historical existence.

Recently I bought a nine-volume set of admirably produced paperbacks each carrying a selection of short stories from ten “official” Indian languages under the banner of *Katha*, an institution dedicated to the promotion of Indian language writing in a far greater and professional manner than the so-called sahitya academies. These are “prize” stories chosen by panels of the foremost litterateurs

of the various languages and translated by competent writers of the English language. Having earlier read *Mapping Memories*, a collection of Urdu short stories from the same assembly line of good literature — yes, there is a lot more to Indo-Pak Urdu writing than Sadat Hasan Manto’s Toba Tek Singh — and being personally acquainted with the richness of literature of the South, I came to the conclusion

that the current craze for English fiction is another form of colonialism that would swamp the flowering of genuine Indian literature.

I read the stories in a random way, initially as a soporific inducement while travelling. And then they gripped me. The story themes ranged from intricate family tangles to surrealism and magic realism.

The flavour of the soil, the craftsmanship, the delicious mix of native culture and rebellious thought, the reformist zeal, all flowed through. Geeta Dharmarajan, the editor of the series and mainstay of the Katha outfit, has provided us, the literate Indians, with something to educate ourselves about — the true flavour of the inexhaustibly fascinating plurality of Indian literature.

How absurd is the assessment of Salman Rushdie that the post-

**The current  
spate of English  
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Independence prose writing of "Indian writers working in English is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 official languages of India". That is not so much an assessment as the instant judgement of a literary kangaroo court ignorant of at least 15 of the 16

languages on which the sentence was passed.

To me, the current spate of English fiction writing by Indians, aimed almost exclusively at the West bypassing even the discerning readers of India, remains a pathetic post-colonial anomaly. Rushdie himself gave expression to it by calling it "the bastard child of Empire, sired on India by the departing British". Rushdie, Naipaul and Vikram Seth are not scions of this

illegitimate lineage but they have become role models for a horde of writers who couldn't think of their own mother tongue as a medium of creative self-expression. Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Anita Desai and R.K.Narayan, as also Manohar Malgaonkar and Raja Rao, by their sheer vintage escaped the trap of by-passing local audiences. The last two could not even figure in that otherwise admirable collection of writing edited by Rushdie and Elizabeth West — *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing* — for that very reason.

Kannada litterateur U.R.Ananthamurthy uses a native idiom to explain this phenomenon of the primacy of English over Indian languages — the traditional Indian home as a metaphor for Indian literature. The writers in English are what he calls the frontyard of the house, showy, powerful and

**Ruth Prawar  
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extrovert—the exclusive domain of males, literates and handlers of the affairs of the external world. The backyard is where life in all its variety, intricate human relations, grassroot activity and much else, goes on. Here assemble a wide variety of humans and caste is no bar.

For centuries, Sanskrit was the frontyard of Indian literature. People spoke a variety of languages but the mark of scholarship was determined by the ability to write

Sanskrit. From Sankara and Ramanuja to Bhartrihari and Kalidasa, the masters spoke different languages but wrote in Sanksrit. Tamil, of course was an exception. With a well-developed literary tradition and grammar as old as Sanskrit, Tamil could boast of literature dating back 2000 years. The folktales, verses and songs were the backyard literature, surviving through

generations but not crossing the borders to come to the front of the house. Outstanding poets and writers occasionally brought the backyard life into the frontyard of lasting literature. Ananthamurthy says, the innumerable indigenous oral folk traditions, "what we may call *desi*", constituted the "secret, fragrant, fertile and unused" backyard. The classics in Sanskrit could be called the *marga*—the royal highway. English has replaced Sanskrit as the frontyard *marga* though it is yet to produce anything by way of a classic that can survive even half a century of historical existence.

The death of Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, Malayalam literature's "historian of instincts" marks the end of an era, which never existed for the likes of Salman Rushdie. A rich crop of Indian language writers

have broken the barriers of home-yards. Thakazhi's *Chemmeen* (The Shrimp) was a classic deserving of the Nobel Prize, like Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. India has had a glorious

line of literary giants in the Indian languages —

Shivarama Karanth and Masti Venkatesha Iyengar in Kannada, Kalki Krishnamurthy and T. Janakiraman in Tamil, Gopinath Mohanty in Oriya, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya in Assamese and Tarashakar Banerjee In Bengali. I leave out

Hindi because it, too, is a frontyard language.

(Katha has brought out the tenth volume of prize stories from the Indian backyard. It is a treasure-house, standing out in sharp contrast in terms of quality, as against the pretensions and arrogance of the commercially successful muck flowing out of some of the publishing houses.)



Shivarama Karanth

# Nandana



*Out of the Ordinary*

## Heavenly Stone

One day in 1621 during the reign of the Emperor Jehangir, a noise like thunder was heard in a village near Jalandhar. Later, some villagers reported seeing a light falling from the sky.

A government official named Muhammad Said rushed to the spot where the object was thought to have fallen and found the earth there scorched. A mass of hot iron weighing about 150 tolas was recovered from the area.

Jehangir was fascinated by the rock that had fallen from heaven and ordered that a knife, a dagger and a sword be fashioned from the iron.

Meteorites fall into two broad categories — stony meteorites composed mainly of silicates, and iron meteorites made up mostly of iron.

Iron from meteorites has been used since ancient times, but until the early part of the nineteenth century scientists refused to believe that rocks could fall from the sky.



## People

# Waiting For Freedom

One of the thousands of people who participated in Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March during the salt satyagraha was Pancha Kaka Patel, a resident of Karadi village near Dandi. Pancha Kaka was a staunch disciple of the Mahatma.

The government confiscated his house and lands and imprisoned him for his role in the salt satyagraha and no-tax movement. While he was being taken to jail a police officer said to him: "See what you got for your trouble. Not an inch of land remains in your possession. You've lost your house too."

Pancha Kaka replied: "You can rest assured I will never ask for the return of my property till India becomes free."

In 1937, a Congress government was formed in the



then Bombay Presidency and the Chief Minister, B.G. Kher, sent a message to Pancha Kaka saying that his government was prepared to return his house and his lands.

Pancha Kaka replied that he had taken a pledge not to take back his property until India became free and that day had not yet come.

In 1947 when India had achieved independence, Pancha Kaka was again informed that he could repossess his confiscated property.

He contacted his mentor and asked him: "Gandhiji, do you feel the freedom you had envisaged has come?"

To which Gandhiji replied: "Unfortunately I must say 'no'."

Pancha Kaka wrote to the government saying that he did not want his property back.

## Story Time

# Poetic Injustice

*- A Jaina Tale*

**V**araruchi, the Sanskrit poet and grammarian, would write a new poem each day for his royal master, the ninth Nanda King of Magadha. The king would reward him with a purse of gold.

The king's treasurer, a man named Shakadal felt that the king was being too generous and resolved to put an end to his extravagance. Shakadal had nine daughters, all of whom were endowed with an extraordinary memory. They never forgot anything. If they heard a poem once, they could recite it any time afterwards without missing out a single word.

Shakadal took them to the court one day. Vararuchi came while they were there and recited a poem he had composed, to the king. The king liked the poem and was about to reward him as usual when Shakadal stepped



forward and said: "That was a good poem. But not new. I've heard it before. It's the work of a poet very few people have heard of, but my daughters and I are familiar with his poems. Anyone of my daughters could recite the poem we've just heard."

The king asked Shakadal's eldest daughter to recite the poem and she, depending on her superb

memory, recited it without missing out a single word.

Vararuchi was taken aback but did not lose his presence of mind. He composed another poem on the spot and recited it to the king.

"Another old poem," said Shakadal. "Anyone of my daughters could recite this poem too."

The king asked Shakadal's

youngest daughter to recite the poem. She did so, effortlessly.

Vararuchi was outraged that he should be accused of stealing other people's verses and strongly protested his innocence. But no one was prepared to believe him. He staggered out of the palace in shock and dismay at the turn of events and never wrote another poem for the king.

## The Mulla in the Dust

**M**ulla Nasruddin had a buffalo whose horns were set wide apart. The Mulla often felt an urge to sit on the animal's head between the horns, but never dared try it. One day the animal came and sat down very near him. The Mulla threw caution to the winds and seizing the horns swung himself into the space between them.

"Now I feel like

a king on his throne!" he said exultantly to his wife. The buffalo, startled by the sudden invasion of its privacy, got indignantly to its feet and jerked its head violently forward. The Mulla went sailing into the air

and fell head foremost into a ditch.

"It doesn't matter," he said to his wife who came running to help him. "It's not the first time a king has lost his throne."



## WORLDLY WISDOM

◆ If you want your dreams to come true, don't sleep.

— Yiddish proverb

◆ He who asks a question is a fool for 5 minutes. He who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.

— Chinese proverb

◆ "I don't believe in God!" said a man, almost boastfully, to the German poet, Heinrich Heine. "That's not surprising," said Heine. "In Frankfurt I met a watch who did not believe in the existence of watchmakers."

◆ If a man deceives me once, shame on him; If he deceives me twice, shame on me.

— Arab proverb

## Sparkler

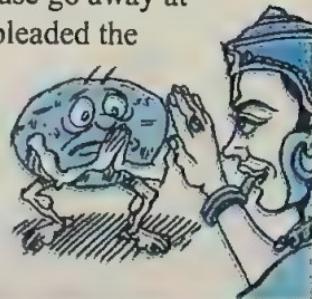
### The Potato's Plea

The humble potato, frightened by the way people from all walks of life were consuming his brothers, sought out the Lord of Creation and poured out his grief to him.

"People are eating us in large numbers, Lord," said the potato. "Please do something. They roast us, boil us, put us in curries, put us in vegetables, mash us, fry us to a crisp..."

"Please go away at once," pleaded the Lord.

"You're making my mouth water."



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# CHETANA

for women

Achiever

## India's First Lady Doctor

In 1874, Anandi Bai became a mother when she was just fourteen. But her baby lived only a few days.

There had been no doctor available when her child had needed medical attention. Anandi and her husband Gopalrao Joshi felt it was a terrible thing that there were so few doctors and not a single lady doctor. She decided to become a doctor herself!

By chance, an American lady learnt of her desire to study medicine and invited her to the United States. Anandi went alone. She studied at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania and graduated in March 1886. The same year she set sail for India. When she had left for America, she had been condemned and heckled by the orthodox



members of her community, but when she returned she was welcomed back with pride. For now she was a doctor - India's first lady doctor!

People now respected and admired her and her success was to inspire women for generations afterwards.

Tragically, Anandibai never got a chance to serve her countrymen for whose sake she had undergone so many tribulations. She died of tuberculosis a few months after her return, at the age of twenty-two. Her last words were : "I did all that I could."

## Personality

# The Nagarani

Gaidinliu, a 15-year-old Naga girl was studying in high school at the time when the Nagas elected her as their leader to fight the British. The Nagas had turned to her after her cousin, Jadonang, was caught and hanged by the British for trying to proclaim a Naga Raj.

The teenager organised an army and a network of spies who reported every movement of the British troops to her. She had all able-bodied men enlisted as warriors and trained them to fight. She urged the people not to pay taxes. The Nagas willingly contributed to her cause. With the money, she bought guns for her warriors.

The British tried their best to capture her but she managed to elude them, changing her hideout



and assuming different names. She was caught finally on 17 October 1932, when Capt. McDonald surrounded and attacked the fort she was rebuilding.

Gaidinliu, her brother and some others were taken prisoners. They were treated worse than animals in prison. Tied with ropes in a cell and beaten severely, they were sometimes made to spend the bitterly cold winter nights without a stitch of clothing on them. But they didn't break under the torture. Nor did they withdraw their movement.

Pt. Nehru, impressed by her valour, gave her the name, Nagarani.

The gallant Nagarani passed away in February 1993.

## Looking Back

# First Woman at the Olympics

**W**hen Olympic Games were first played all contestants were male. Women could neither participate nor watch. However, in the Olympics of 404 BC a woman attended the games, and though detected, lived to tell the tale.

The woman was the mother of a boxer named Pisodorus. Pisodorus was being trained by

his father. On his father's death his mother took over his training.

On the day of the competition she donned male attire and went to the stadium to watch her son compete.

Pisodorus won. His mother's joy was so great that she leaped over the barricade in order to go to congratulate him. In doing so, her clothing

slipped and she stood revealed as a woman. Any other woman would've been put to death, but Pisodorus' mother came from a family of Olympic winners (her father and brothers were Olympic champions) and she was pardoned.



Women's World

## Breaking Male Tradition

The highlight of the festival of Janmashtami in Mumbai is the breaking of *Dahi handis*—mudpots filled with curd and butter and suspended high above the ground. The mud pot also has cash tied to it. Groups of young men, who call themselves *Govindas*, form human pyramids to



break open the mud pots, enacting Lord Krishna's endeavours as a child to steal butter and curd from earthen pots kept beyond his reach. Last year tradition was broken when an all-woman group formed a pyramid to reach a *hundi* at Mumbai's busy suburb, Dadar.



IN 1998 when she was 17 years old, Crystal Cornick of Baltimore, USA gave birth to triplets. Twenty months later on 1st February 2000, she gave birth to another set of triplets. All the children are doing fine.

According to scientists, the chances of a woman giving birth to two sets of triplets is as high as one in ten million!

THE chief ingredients of lipstick are castor oil and paraffin, both laxatives.



## *Fitness*

### Sukhasana

#### (PEACEFUL POSE)

THIS yogic asana will help to quieten the mind. Do it everytime you feel stressed out and agitated.

1. Sit with your legs crossed, head erect, shoulders relaxed and drawn at the back, elbows relaxed, back straight, abdomen tucked in and palms gently resting on the knees.



2. Close your eyes. Sit in this posture for three minutes. While in this position, keep thoughts away from the mind by observing your

breathing or count backwards from 150 to 1 or even focus on the tip of your nose (with the eyes closed).



### A Namaste that relaxes

*Here's a simple remedy for tired shoulders.*

1. Stand straight, with your feet planted firmly on the ground. Keep your hands behind you and try to bring the palms together in a 'namaste' (this may require some practice).
2. Remain thus for a few minutes and enjoy the warm massaging sensation that courses down the shoulders.

Fiction

# Shantabai

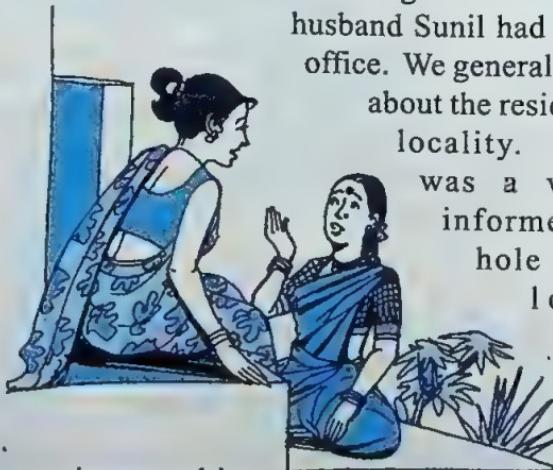
J. N. Chowdhary

**B**ehind the building in which we lived in a ground floor flat, was a shelter made of bamboos and covered with PVC sheets, what is called a *jhuggi*.

A few days after we had shifted, I was standing in the balcony facing the *jhuggi* and wondering who lived there as the place looked very neat and clean.

While I thus was immersed in thought, a young woman of around 25 came out and addressed me, "Bibiji namaste, my name is Shantabai and I live in this *jhuggi* along with my husband. He is a carpenter."

Then she drew nearer and said in very friendly tone that



if she could be of any help I should not hesitate in calling her. We were of same age. Slowly a bond of friendship grew between us. She would come after I had finished my morning chores and my husband Sunil had left for the office. We generally gossiped about the residents of the locality. Shantabai was a very well informed about hole of the locality.

Shantabai was quite intelligent and had studied till Std. 8 before her marriage. She had been married for nearly 8 or 9 years but was childless. She had seen many doctors and quacks and had visited holy men but to no avail. Her husband wanted a child very much but was

reconciled to their fate.

One day I saw Shantabai sitting quietly before her house in a very sad mood. I called her out to her and asked her what the matter was. She told me that her husband has deserted her and married another women. She was sad, not because her man had taken this step but she felt that he should have told her and taken her into confidence. She would have understood.

Life went on as usual. I was expecting a baby, so I was away for around four months. Shantabai came to visit me the same evening. While we were having tea my son woke up. Shantabai immediately picked him up and cuddled him to sleep. She told me that she was working as time-keeper on daily wages in the PWD. When I asked her why she hadn't remarried she told me that once was enough and she would rather get some education and become something in life.

Meanwhile Sunil was

transferred to another city. It was only 8 years later that he was posted back to the same city on promotion.

After arriving there, I wanted to see Shantabai. So one Sunday I asked Sunil to take me to the area where we once used to stay. There were a lot of changes in the area. There was a sprawling shopping centre and a sturdy double-storeyed house where Shantabai's *jhuggi* once used to be. We walked into the compound and near the door I saw a name-plate on which was written: SHANTABAI, CORPORATOR.

At first I was hesitant but then curiosity overcame me and I rang the doorbell. A young girl of 9 or 10 came to the door and on my asking for Shanta Bai went inside and shouted, "Mummy someone to see you!" After a few moments, Shantabai appeared, clad in a light blue cotton sari. At first she did not recognize me then her face lit up and she came forward and embraced me.

Shantabai told me that after her husband had left her she had started working in PWD on daily wages and she had enrolled in a night school and subsequently passed the school-leaving exam. She was confirmed in the job and a few years after she became a member of the PWD employees' union. When the corporation elections were held she was nominated, as the ward was reserved for women. She won the election and become a corporator.

When I asked about the girl and whether Shantabai had remarried, she laughed and said

that the girl was the daughter her husband had had with his second wife. She had died in childbirth. Her husband had come to her with the infant and begged her to care for it. She did not accept him back but took the child and brought her up as well as she would have her own! After all, she was her husband's daughter.

I left the house, amazed at the humanity of this woman. I marvelled at the fighting spirit and the yearning to become someone, that had taken her from being just another deserted woman to the pinnacle of success and fame.

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YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

# B J Prasnottara

101

Bhavan's Journal is happy to announce the revival of our ancient traditional method of imparting knowledge and wisdom through questions and answers. We invite our readers to ask questions on religion, philosophy, society, constitution, literature, health and science. The answers will be provided by such modern day sages as the Shankaracharyas of Kanchi and Sringeri, and Swami Ranganathananda as well as renowned experts that include former President and present Bhavan's President R. Venkataraman, Bharat Ratnas M.S.Subbalakshmi and Lata Mangeshkar, Padma Vibhushan Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasier, Dr. Raja Ramanna, M. P., Dr. R. Chidambaram, former Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and others.



*Mail your questions to:*

The Editor, Bhavan's Journal (Prasnottara),  
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi  
Marg, Mumbai-400 007.

## **Yoga and Heart Disease**

*Yoga is increasingly being used in the West to cure heart ailments. Why then is yoga not being adopted in India to treat heart disease?*

**Sudhanshu Dey**  
*Mumbai*

Curing heart ailments through yoga is a very general statement. Curing an ailment is not the objective of yoga. Correcting the factors that contribute to ill-health may mean imbibing a new way of life — a new approach to life. This really helps.

At present, at the Yoga Institute and the International Board, Santacruz, Mumbai, a hundred cardiac patients requiring angioplasty or by-pass surgery are being attended to on a one-year basis. They are helped to bring about changes in their way of life — exercise, routines, food habits, recreation etc. The Yoga teachers visit the homes of the cardiac patients to bring about changes in lifestyle of the family. Yoga in this way seems to be helping cardiac patients.



**Answer given by: Dr. Jayadeva  
Yogendra, Director, The Yoga Institute,  
Santacruz, Mumbai**

## Managing Hypertension without Drugs

*How can high blood pressure or hypertension be managed successfully without recourse to drugs? Can it be controlled with the help of exercise, a special diet and change in lifestyle?*

**N. C. Menon**  
Kochi

First get your family doctor to check if you have any disease that presents as raised blood pressure (secondary hypertension). Next ask him if you have any target organ damage (kidney, heart, brain or the eyes). If the above two are negative you could certainly try to lower your blood pressure without drugs with the help of your doctor's supervision, in case these methods do not work for you. All of us are not alike!

- ◆ Daily walking at one's own pace for an hour.
- ◆ Vegetarian diet with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits with very low salt and sugar.
- ◆ Meditation, yogic exercises, and universal love. Avoid hatred and jealousy, anger, and excitement.
- ◆ Try and see that you maintain a standard body weight.
- ◆ Keep a watch on your pressure.



**Answer given by: Dr. B. M. Hegde, Vice-Chancellor of the Manipal Academy of Higher Education and the Chairman of the Bhavan's Mangalore Kendra**

# Obituary

Shri Dewang Mehta

On April 12, 2001, Shri Dewang Mehta, President, National Association of Software Service Companies (NASSCOM), passed away in Sydney due to heart failure. He was only 38.

Shri Mehta was one of those involved from the beginning, along with Shri Murli Deora, in the setting up of Bhavan's Gandhi Institute of Computer Education and Information Technology. He was a past student of Bhavan's Mehta Vidyalaya, New Delhi.

Shri Dewang Mehta's untimely death has come at a time when he was deeply engrossed in working out ways of reducing the impact on India,



of a global IT slowdown.

A relentless lobbyist and a powerful spokesman for the Indian software industry, he was persuading global companies to outsource their IT needs from this country. In fact, his

visit to Australia was part of an overall endeavour of NASSCOM and the Government to help the software industry penetrate the Asian Pacific market in view of the US slowdown. Shri Mehta maintained that the impact of the slowdown on India may not be as great as was being made out to be.

In his demise, the Bhavan has lost a supporter of its programme of providing free computer education and the IT industry, an optimist.

# Bhavan's News

## Bharat Gaurav Award

Shri G. Natarajan, a life-member of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, has been selected for the prestigious 'Bharat Gaurav Award' instituted by the India International Friendship Society, New Delhi, for his work in Science and Engineering.



Shri G. Natarajan



Chairman Bhavan's Chennai Kendra Dr. S. V. Narasimhan, felicitating Shri S. Ramakrishnan, Executive Secretary and Director-General of Bhavan's on being awarded the Padma Bhushan.

## Felicitation

Shri S. Ramakrishnan, Executive Secretary & Director-General of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was felicitated on his receiving Padma Bhushan by the Chennai Kendra on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2001, in a function held at Chennai. Dr. S. V. Narasimhan,

Chairman, Chennai Kendra presented him with a silver pot with Ashtalakshmi engraved on it.

### **Bhavan's Aditya Vidyashram, Reddipalayam**

The Annual day of Bhavan's Aditya Vidyashram, Reddipalayam, Ariyalur, was celebrated on March 19th, 2001. Dr. R. Kausalya Phd., Principal, Tamil Nadu Govt. College of Music, Thiruvaiyaru, was the Chief Guest and delivered the keynote address after distributing the prizes. Shri K. C. Birla, Joint

president, Grasim Industries Ltd., Reddipalayam presided over the function. Shri T. K. Parame-swaran, Director, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra was also present. A colourful variety entertainment programme was put up by the students.

### **Gold Medal for T. P. Manoj**

Dr. R. K. Narayanan and Smt. P.Kausalya Narayanan Memorial Prize of a Gold Medal was



**Swami Sakrananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Poranattukara, Thissur, awarding Gold Medal to Sri T. P. Manoj (Std.X), the best boy of outstanding character.**

awarded to Shri T. P. Manoj (Xth Standard) the best boy of outstanding character in the Sri Ramakrishna Gurukulam High School at the Special School Function on 9-3-2001 by Swami Sakrananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Puranattukara, Thrissur.

## High Achievers

◆ Bhavan's Ambuja Vidya Niketan, Ambujanagar (Guj) has performed well in the Assessment Test conducted by the University of New South Wales in Computer Science, Science, English and Mathematics.

*The names of the students are as follows:-*

P r a d e e p a  
Kadiyala – Class VI  
(High distinction),  
Alisha Sorkar VII,  
Apurv R. Mishra  
VII, Adil Iqbal Halai  
IX, Anupam Jain IX,  
Prashant Kumar IX,  
Prateek Singh IX.



Pranav Chavda

Romita Mehta IX, Shilpa Kothari IX, Nisha Chandra IX (all distinction).

◆ A student of Bhavan's Andheri college, Pranav Chavda, 15, studying in Std XI (Science) is on the panel of experts on web development of U.S.-based exp.com. He has created a website that can speed up the hunt for information on the net. He has developed a Javascript which enables its users to log on to four search engines at the same time and scan the required information in one page. His website is [www.totalsearch4u.com](http://www.totalsearch4u.com).

He dreams of a cyber school for bringing together teachers and kids on the net.

◆ Supriya Shreyan, Saima Azmi and Don Thomas students of Bhavan's Andheri college



**Participants with Principals (LtoR) Don Thomas, Dr. Mrs. Indu Kulkarni, Km. Supriya Shreyan, Principal D.B. Kadam, Km. Salma Azmi and Dr. Mrs. Mary Thomas.**

participated in the Asia Pacific Regional students conference on 'Culture of Peace through Value- Based Universal Education System— A Student's Perspective' from February 3rd to 5th, 2001.

The UNESCO has instituted a Chair in Human Rights, Democracy and Peace at Macer's MIT Pune, for the Asia Pacific Region.

Supriya Shreyan of T.Y.B.Com presented a paper

on "Science and Spirituality and its Role in promoting World Peace", Saima Azmi of S.Y.B.Com. read a paper on "Students perspective on World Peace" and Don Thomas of F.Y. B.Com. read a paper on "Value-based Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Vision and Action". Saima Azmi was adjudged the best participant and a shield and certificate for excellence was awarded to her. Supriya

Shreyan and Don Thomas won second places in their category.

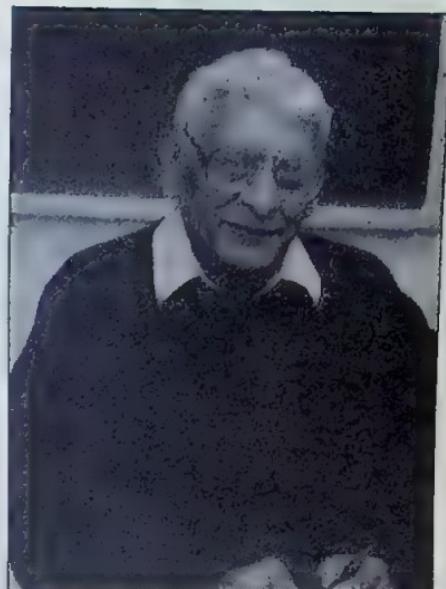
### **PRINCIPAL K. N. SHAH PASSES AWAY**

Principal K. N. Shah of Bhavan's Seth R.A. College of Science, Ahmedabad passed away on February 3, 2001, at Ahmedabad. He was 75. He was with Bhavan's Ahmedabad College from 1965 to 1981.

Before joining Bhavan's College, he was with St. Xavier's College for 10 years, as Professor of Mathematics.

He was Hon. Director of the Development Council for affiliated colleges of Gujarat University. He was Vice-Chancellor of Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar in 1981. He was also Vice-Chancellor of Saurashtra University, Rajkot from 1987-1990.

He is survived by his wife and four daughters.



Principal K. N. Shah

### **15th Management Seminar on "Budget & Tax" at Bhavan's Delhi Kendra**

The MBA Department of Bhavan's Delhi Kendra held its 15<sup>th</sup> Management Seminar on March 5th, 2001. Shri R. N. Lakhotia, the eminent tax consultant and writer was the keynote speaker.

Shri Lakhotia started his discourses with a Sanskrit shloka invoking the Gods and



At the Seminar seen in the picture (L. to R.) Shri P. A. Ramakrishnan of Chennai Kendra; Shri J. Veeraraghavan, Director, Bhavan's Delhi Kendra; Shri R. N. Lakhota (responding to a question); N. N. Pillai, Principal, Bhavan's Sardar Patel College of Communication & Management and Prof. Shyam Babu Vyas, Co-ordinator, MBA Department.

expressed his delight at being present. He said that he was a member of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and was very proud of its great service traditions.

He emphasised that, "Tax planning is not *Kara chor*i. It is *Kara Niyojan*." He stressed that the tax payer himself must get involved in the tax planning rather than leaving it to the consultant or

the chartered accountant.

He recounted the humorous experiences he had had as a Class I officer with the I-T Department in the early 1960's.

His talk was very insightful and informative.

He encouraged the participants at the seminar to write to him with any question on tax matters, through his regular columns

in 'The Times of India' and 'The Pioneer'.

Shri Lakhota fielded many questions. He was presented a Bhavan's publication — "Gems of Mahatma Gandhi" — in 24 volumes by Shri J. Veeraraghavan, Director of Bhavan's Delhi Kendra.

Prof. N. N. Pillai, Principal, Bhavan's Sardar Patel College of Communication &

Management, proposed a vote of thanks. Prof. Shyam Vyas moderated.

### **Foundation of Bhavan's Puthucode School**

The foundation stone-laying ceremony of Bhavan's School was held on March 11, 2001, at Puthucode by Brahma Shri Subramania Vadhyar in the presence of



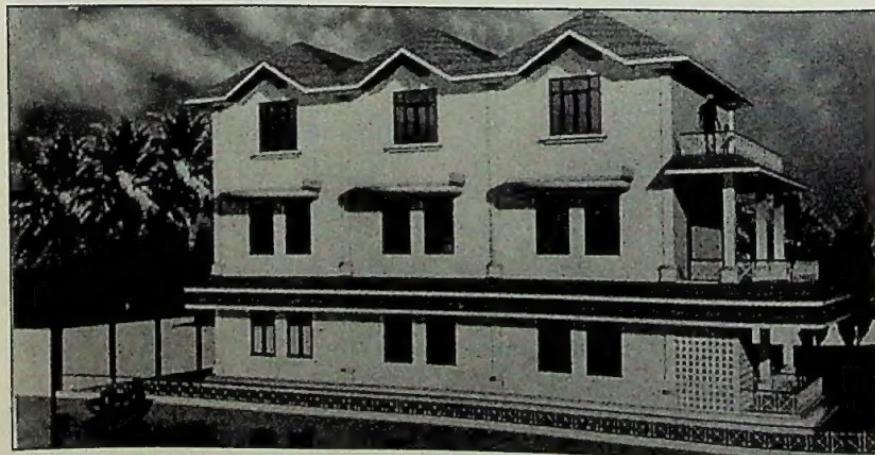
Brahma Shri Subramania Vadhyar laying Foundation Stone of Bhavan's School at Puthucode Kendra, Palghat, Kerala.

leading members of the village. The organizers appealed to the public to come forward with liberal donations to complete the school, which requires more than a crore of rupees.

The donations may kindly be sent to The Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Puthucode Kendra, North Village, Puthucode, Palghat, Kerala. The donations are eligible for Income - Tax Exemption.

Shri H.R.Dasharathi, C/o. Om Shatidhama, 3371, 13<sup>th</sup> Cross, K.R.Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> Main, Shastrinagar, Bangalore - 560 028 has voluntarily donated a sum of Rs.1,000/- to Bhavan to meet the increased cost in bringing out the **Bhavan's Journal**. We appreciate very much his noble gesture. The Bhavan's assets are the goodwill of the good, blessings of godly and assistance of good souls like him. May his tribe increase. May God bless him.

— Editor



**Proposed building of Bhavan's School at Puthucode, Palghat, Kerala.**

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